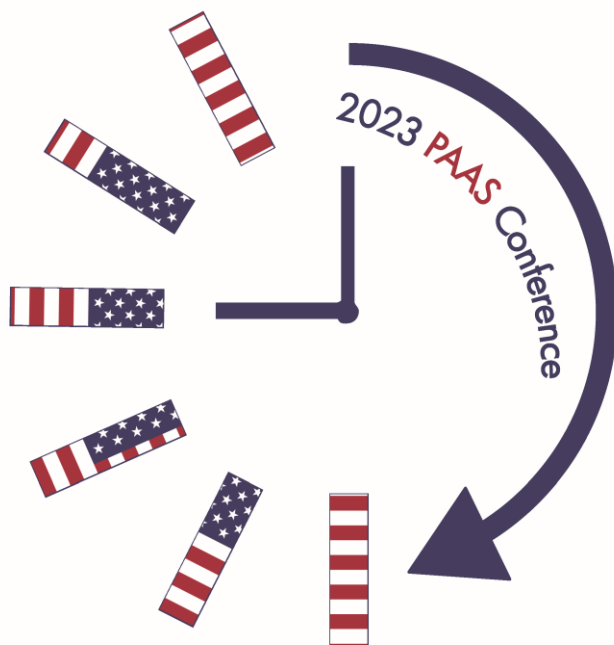


# The Polish Association for American Studies 2023 Annual Conference

## America and Deep Time: Alternate Geographies, Temporalities, and Histories



**Book of Abstracts**

**Poznań 2023**

## CONTENTS

KEYNOTE LECTURE 1: PROF. WAI CHEE DIMOCK .....	6
KEYNOTE LECTURE 2: PROF. JULIA FIEDORCZUK .....	7
KEYNOTE LECTURE 3: PROF. WIESŁAW KUHN .....	9
<b>SPECIAL GUEST: PROF. FORREST GANDER .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>PANEL SUBMISSIONS</b>	
Cinematic times, spaces, and sensibilities .....	13
Time, space, and memory – Homes and houses in American literary and graphic narratives .....	16
The gift of translation: A conversation with Polish and American poet-translators .....	20
Reappraising Joan Didion .....	23
Rethinking the American East: Unearthing the Frontier Renaissance .....	26
<b>INDIVIDUAL SUBMISSIONS AND BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER</b>	
Acadia Lilith	
Prescient Plague Fiction: How Near-Future US SciFi Anticipated Corporate Pandemic Profiteering .....	28
Adamczewski Tymon	
Beyond Space, Beyond Time: The Material Ecologies of Richard McGuire’s <i>Here</i> .....	29
Aghayev Orkhan	
Racist, Terrorist, or Activist? Beyoncé’s Artivism and the Power of Imagination .....	31
Ballengee Christopher L.	
From Harry Belafonte to the Kingston Trio: Claiming Authenticity and Performing Blackness during the U.S. Calypso Craze, 1940s-1960s .....	33
Belenetskyi Anton	
“The World Was Rearranging Itself Around Me”: Deepening the Anthropocenic Present in Jenny Offill’s <i>Weather</i> and Ben Lerner’s <i>10:04</i> .....	34
Bryla Martyna	
Chekhov in the Times of Lockdown: Gary Shteyngart’s <i>Our Country Friends</i> as a “Fable of Our Broken Time” .....	36
Buráková Zuzana	
Traversing the Time in Cormac McCarthy’s Fiction .....	37
Dobrogoszcz Tomasz	
Metabolizing the Trauma in Selected Contemporary Eco-fiction .....	38
Dudek Mateusz	
Dina Nayeri’s <i>The Ungrateful Refugee</i> : Migration in between Narratives, Temporalities, and Identities .....	39

THE POLISH ASSOCIATION FOR AMERICAN STUDIES 2023 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

---

Dybska Aneta	
Black Reparations in the U.S. and International Human Rights Law .....	41
Ferens Dominika	
Sigrid Nunez’s Imagined Literary Community .....	42
Filipczak Iwona	
Re-Orientalist tropes in Akhil Sharma’s <i>A Life of Adventure and Delight</i> (2017) .....	43
Gajek Olga	
Ecocritical Contemporary Horror: Cannibalism as Interventional Metaphor .....	44
Gholami Fatemeh	
Stop Feeding the Image: Ecophobic Manifestations in American Multimedia Franchise .....	45
Giza Jarosław	
Taylor Stevens’ Vanessa Michael Munroe: American Lisbeth Salander? .....	46
Górny Antoni	
Sweetback in Algiers: The Ghetto Chronotope and the Redefinition of “Race” in American Film .....	47
Hetman Jarosław	
Living In a Future Which Has Already Become a Past. A Few Remarks on David Foster Wallace’s <i>Infinite Jest</i> .....	48
Ileri Eren	
Cyborg Astronaut: Disembodied White Masculinity and the Imagination of Outer Space in Science Fiction Digital Games .....	49
Jacheć Tomasz	
The Most Important NBA Game in the History of Polish Television: Yep... it’s about Jordan again ;-)	51
Kaźmierczak Janusz	
Premonitions of a troubled future: <i>Love, death and robots</i> and deep time .....	52
Klęczaj-Siara Ewa	
In search of Black creativity and joy – Black urban space in African American picture books .....	53
Kołodziejczyk Dorota	
“America is ‘Maps’ Maps are ghosts.” Remapping America through extinct space and erased time in Natalie DIAZ’ <i>Postcolonial Love Poem</i> .....	54
Kowalczyk Andrzej S.	
Beyond Transcendentalism: Sylvester Judd’s <i>Margaret</i> (1845) and the Tradition of Utopia .....	56
Leniarska Aleksandra Zuzanna	
Middle Class versus Mountain Lionesses: Neorealist temporalities and environmentalism in Lucy Ellmann’s <i>Ducks, Newburyport</i> and Jonathan Franzen’s <i>Freedom</i> .....	57
Lipski Jakub	
<i>The Female American</i> (1767): A failed Amazon and the Founding Myth .....	59
Łaskiewicz Weronika	
The Advent of Amborgs: Transgressing the Boundaries between Species in Ursula K. Le Guin’s <i>Buffalo Gals and Other Animal Presences</i> .....	60
Macedulska Katarzyna	
Dreaming America in Abdi Nor Iftin’s Memoir <i>Call Me American</i> (2018) .....	61
Malinowska Aleksandra Julia	
The Problem with Valerie Solanas: Why do Feminists Keep Writing About Her? .....	63
Mandel Susannah	
The U.S. and the “Rest of the West”: Is the Modern U.S. a Policy Outlier Compared to the Rest of the Western World? .....	64

THE POLISH ASSOCIATION FOR AMERICAN STUDIES 2023 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

---

Mączko Małgorzata	
A Lifetime of Responsibility: Alternative Temporality and Black Girlhood in American Cinema .....	66
Miernik Mirosław Aleksander	
Puritans and Snobs: Conflict Between the Urban and the Provincial in the works of Elizabeth Strout .....	67
Myk Małgorzata	
Selfhood at War: Risking Duration of Ecstatic Variation (E. Tracy Grinnell's <i>Helen, A Fugue</i> ) .....	68
Noworyta Marcelina	
Necessity of translation: The translation turn and essays of the fourth-wave American feminism on the example of <i>The Mother of All Questions</i> by Rebecca Solnit .....	69
Olsza Małgorzata	
Looking at the overlooked: The vision of "slow violence" in Chris Hedges and Joe Sacco's <i>Days of Destruction, Days of Revolt</i> .....	70
Paradowski Michał	
Polis and Beyond: Urban Space in Charles Olson's <i>The Maximus Poems</i> .....	71
Pawlak Barbara	
Singularity on the Horizon: Merging of Technology and Humanity in Don DeLillo's Novels .....	72
Perkowska-Gawlik Elżbieta	
Narratives Stuck in the Present: Nonstandard Space and Time in <i>The Decameron Project: 29 New Stories from the Pandemic</i> (2020) .....	73
Piechucka Alicja	
Pandemic as Pretext: The Implications of Global Cataclysms in Don DeLillo's <i>The Silence</i> and Slavoj Žižek's Writings on COVID-1 .....	74
Płomiński Piotr	
Contingent realities and the vibrancy of matter in Philip K. Dick's <i>The Man in the High Castle</i> .....	75
Podgajna Patrycja	
Human/Posthuman Storytelling Across Time: <i>Speak</i> (2015) by Louisa Hall .....	76
Reichardt Ulfried	
Multiple Times and 'Mismatched Temporalities' .....	78
Rüskamp Eva	
Where the Wasteland Blossoms: Reclaiming Appalachia's Rural Communities for a Just Transition .....	79
Sawczuk Tomasz	
Leaving Names in the Summit Book: Ecocide and Hybrid Memoryscapes in Gary Snyder's <i>Danger on Peaks</i> .....	81
Smoliński Sebastian	
Toward James Baldwin's theory of cinema: Intercepting white Hollywood and transcending African American identity in <i>The Devil Finds Work</i> .....	82
Soler i Arjona Sara	
Queering Diasporic Writing: Memory, Temporality, and Form in Ocean Vuong's Works .....	83
Stulov Yuri	
Cultural Appropriation in the work of American-Ghanaian and American-Nigerian writers .....	84
Szmańko Klara	
Transcending "Eccentricity"? Toppling the Myth of White Exclusivity in Founding the Nation – Maxine Hong Kingston's <i>China Men</i> .....	86
Świetlicki Mateusz	
The Silent Unseen and Underground Soldiers: Polish-Ukrainian Conflicts and Collaboration in American Young Adult Second World War Fiction .....	88

THE POLISH ASSOCIATION FOR AMERICAN STUDIES 2023 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

---

Tardi Mark	
“Silked with Phenomena”: Elizabeth Willis’s posthumanist ontoepistemology .....	89
Turner Ri J.	
Surfacing Submerged Diasporic Critiques of the Construction of the American Polity: Rereading the New York Yiddish Press, 1906-1938 .....	90
Tyczyńska Jagoda	
Bodies in Space (and Time): Cartesian Duality in Richard K. Morgan’s <i>Altered Carbon</i> (2002) .....	91
Vysotska Natalia	
Shakespeare in the American West: Telescoping the Bard in Time and Space .....	92
Wieczorek Paula	
<i>Our History Is the Future</i> : Spiralic Temporalities in Indigenous Speculative Fiction .....	94
Więckowska Katarzyna	
Always coming home: Climate crisis and the writing of utopia .....	95
Wilczyńska Elżbieta	
Ndakinna, Weetamoo and James the Printer – Contributions of indigenous methodologies on the example of <i>Our Beloved Kin</i> by Lisa Brooks .....	96

# **Keynote Lectures**

KEYNOTE LECTURE 1

**PROFESSOR WAI CHEE DIMOCK**

(HARVARD CENTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, HARVARD UNIVERSITY, USA)

**A Long History of Pandemics**

“A Long History of Pandemics” tells an epic story centered on Native Americans, beginning with the smallpox epidemic of the eighteenth century. Focusing on the Cherokee’s strategies in vaccine distribution and the Navajo’s collaboration with NASA in drought forecasting, we explore the resilience of human communities as a crucial complement to science and technology, turning the legacy of harm from the past into a path towards a different future.

**Wai Chee Dimock** writes about public health, climate change, and human and nonhuman intelligence, with a special focus on Indigenous communities. She is William Lampson Professor Emeritus of English and American Studies at Yale University, and a research fellow at Harvard’s Center for the Environment. She has written four books, most recently *Weak Planet* (2020), and is now at work on “AI, Microbes, and Machines: Risky Partners in an Age of Pandemics and Climate Change.” Her essays have appeared in the *Los Angeles Review of Books*, *New York Times*, *New Yorker*, and *Scientific American*.



KEYNOTE LECTURE 2

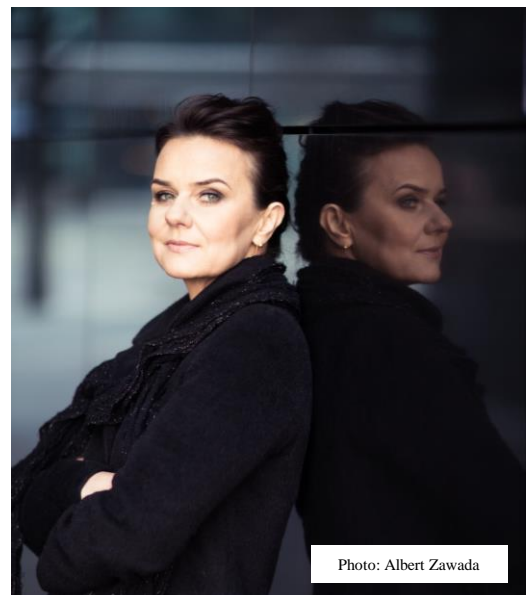
**PROFESSOR JULIA FIEDORCZUK**

(UNIVERSITY OF WARSAW, POLAND)

**‘That Depopulated Silence:’ Geological Imagination  
in Recent North American Poetry**

It is already cliché to say that the Anthropocene is largely a question of pace, and therefore of time. As Dipesh Chakrabarty puts it, the distinction between natural history and human histories gets challenged when humans become a geological force. The conflation of various temporalities and timescales impacts our affective landscape in various ways (including an uneasy mix between a sense of collective human hyper-agency and individual helplessness), but it also leads to a (re)discovery of kinship between organic and mineral species. My talk explores the ways in which North American poets including Ed Roberson, Don McKay, Brenda Hillman and Forrest Gander foreground geos as a fundamental aspect of planetary metabolism. By exploring complex entanglements between various temporalities (the times of organisms, historical time and the deep time of the Earth) the work of these poets exposes unexpected connections across the ontic spectrum, resisting the tendency of environmental discourse to valorise *bios*.

**Julia Fiedorczyk** is a writer, poet, translator, and literary critic. She is an associate professor at the Institute of English Studies and a co-founder of the Environmental Studies Center at the University of Warsaw. Her research interests include ecocriticism, American poetry of the twentieth century, contemporary philosophy, modernism and literary avant-garde, literary theory, psychoanalysis. She is the author of six poetry volumes, including *Listopad nad Narwią*, (2000), *Bio*, (2004). *Planeta rzeczy zagubionych* (2006); *Tlen* (2009); *tuż-tuż* (2012) and *Psalmy* (2018). Her latest book *Psalmy* (Psalms) was awarded the Wisława Szymborska Prize, Poland’s most prestigious prize for poetry. She was nominated for the





Julian Tuwim Award in 2020. She translated numerous American poets into Polish, including Wallace Stevens, John Ashbery, and Laura (Riding) Jackson and Laurie Anderson, and, most recently, Forrest Gander's *Be With*. Her publications include also short stories collections: *Poranek Marii* (Maria's Morning), *Bliskie kraje* (Close countries), novels: *Biała Ofelia* (White Ophelia), *Nieważkość* (Weightlessness; nominated for the Nike Literary Award) and *Pod Słońcem* (Under the Sun) and *Dom Oriona* (The House of Orion). Her literary works have been translated into over twenty languages, including books in English, Spanish, Swedish, Ukrainian, Lithuanian, Serbian and Chinese. She is the author of numerous publications on poetry and ecocriticism, including *Cyborg w ogrodzie: Wprowadzenie do ekokrytyki* (Cyborg in the garden: Introduction to ecocriticism) and *Ecopoetics* (in collaboration with the Mexican poet Gerardo Beltrán). Julia Fiedorczuk co-created the program of the School of Eco-poetics at Warsaw's Institute of Reportage.

KEYNOTE LECTURE 3

**PROFESSOR WIESŁAW KUHN**

(ADAM MICKIEWICZ UNIVERSITY IN POZNAŃ, POLAND)

**Mrs Shortley's New Planet: Alternate Geographies  
and Deep Time in Southern Modernism**

This talk will attempt to apply Wai Chee Dimock's categories of alternate geography and deep time (*Through Other Continents: American Literature and Deep Time*) to the study of southern literature. Southern literature has usually been placed within fixed territorial and temporal borders. Mrs Shortley from Flannery O'Connor's "The Displaced Person" could serve as a figure for an indigenous defensiveness about these borders. Mrs Shortley bristles at the employment of a Polish refugee from the Second World War on the Georgian farm where her husband works. In the smile of Mr Guizac, "Europe stretched out in Mrs Shortley's imagination, mysterious and evil, the devil's experiment station". Mrs Shortley is pushing back on an unacknowledged knowledge: that she no longer, in the late 1940s, lives in the "solid South" of an absolute geographic space, but instead inhabits an unsettling relational space, one permeated by other geographies, by transatlantic events such as the Holocaust, and by alien thought-forms.

The southern modernism of William Faulkner, Robert Penn Warren, Zora Neale Hurston and others can be interpreted as an attempt to grapple with an unfamiliar, global South that was introduced with the First World War. These writers tried to find a symbolic language for such phenomena as the "new death" of this war; for the creation of stateless peoples through the Treaty of Versailles; for the agricultural poverty induced by world Depression; and for the populist dictatorships of Europe. This symbolic language has much in common with the new European systems of thought that tried to account for the post-Versailles order, for example those that centred on political theology, sovereignty, the law, bare life, and the collective flesh. There is also a strong reciprocity between these new systems and the innovative modernist forms that were used by southern authors such as interior monologue, ethnographic surrealism, and the articulation of the "semiotic" of the crowd. Faulkner and James Agee, among other southern writers, also placed the South within the larger

dimensions of “deep time”, particularly those of biology and religion, dimensions that outran the chronological borders of the historic region. These references to “deep time” suggest that a different, and more politicized, temporal model is required in interpreting these authors to that of mythic timelessness or of organic continuity (which have informed so much critical work on southern literature).

One part of southern modernism that the talk will concentrate on is a number of overlooked, late modernist texts such as Faulkner’s *A Fable*, Hurston’s *Moses, Man of the Mountain* and Warren’s *World Enough and Time*. These texts have frequently been dismissed as allegories or fables, as mannered violations of the realist aesthetic. However they are worth looking at again outside of the critical paradigm of an indigenous South. They offer comprehensive, retrospective attempts to sum up the phenomenon of the transatlantic South and its imbrication in interwar Europe. In order to do so they create their own distinctive, and relatively unexplored, discourse of planetary universal and of political-theological origin story.

**Joseph Kuhn** is a university professor at Adam Mickiewicz University, Poland. His main research area is in the literature of the American South. He is the author of a study of Allen Tate (*Allen Tate: A Study in Southern Modernism and the Religious Imagination*) and has published in journals such as *Journal of American Studies*, *The Southern Quarterly* and *Errgo*. In 2017 he went to the Harry Ransom Centre at the University of Texas, Austin on a research fellowship to study the manuscripts of James Agee. He is writing a manuscript on the transatlantic south and interwar Europe.



**Special guest**

SPECIAL GUEST

## PROFESSOR FORREST GANDER

(BROWN UNIVERSITY, USA)

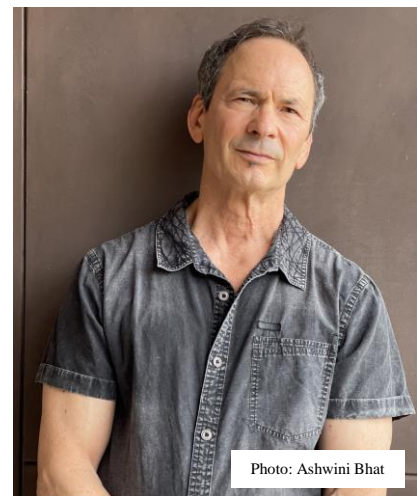
### An Ecology of Intimacies: On Lichens & Eros

Our special guest will be Prof. Forrest Gander, an American poet, translator, and novelist, the winner of Pulitzer Prize for Poetry in 2019 for *Be With*. Prof. Gander's lecture is part of the Academic Poznań open lecture series co-financed by the City of Poznań.

**Forrest Gander** is a celebrated American poet, prose writer, essayist, scholar, translator of poetry, and a versatile multi-genre writer. His academic background includes degrees in geology and literature. He was the Briggs-Copeland poet at Harvard University before becoming The Adele Kellenberg Seaver Professor of Literary Arts and Comparative Literature at Brown University. He is an Emeritus Chancellor for the Academy for the Academy of American Poets and is an elected member of The Academy of Arts & Sciences.

Prof. Gander has authored numerous volumes of poetry, two novels, a collection of essays, and translations of poetry from Spanish and Japanese. He has collaborated with artists from various disciplines, representing diverse realms of art, culture, and languages, including painters, photographers, composers, sculptors, musicians, choreographers, and dancers. His most acclaimed poetry collection is *Be With* (2018), for which he received the prestigious Pulitzer Prize in Poetry. Other notable volumes include *Core Samples from the World* (2011), a finalist for both the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Critics Circle Award; *Eye Against Eye* (2005), *Torn Awake* (2001), and *Science & Steepleflower* (1998). His most recent publications include two poetry books: *Knot* (2022) and *Twice Alive* (2021). Prof. Gander is also the author of an essay collection titled *A Faithful Existence: Reading, Memory, and Transcendence* (2005). and novels *As a Friend* (2008) and *The Trace* (2014).

Prof. Gander has translated the works of authors such as Pablo Neruda, Pura López Colomé, Coral Bracho, Valerie Mejer, and Alfonso D'Aquino. Collaborating with Kyoko Yoshida, he translated a selection of poems by Japanese poet Kiwao Nomura titled *Spectacle & Pigsty*, which earned him the Best Translated Book Award in 2012. In 2016, he edited a collection of selected



poems by Yoshimasu Gozo, titled *Alice Iris Red Horse*. Together with Kent Johnson, he translated a selection of poems by Bolivian poet Jaime Saenz titled *The Night* (Princeton, 2007), which received the PEN Translation Award. He has also received fellowships from institutions such as the Library of Congress, the Guggenheim Foundation, and the United States Artists Foundations.

# **Panel submissions**

## Cinematic times, spaces, and sensibilities

BEATA ZAWADKA

### ***Fatal Attraction* (2023 TV Series) – a Networked Affect or an Affected Network?**

When Adrian Lyne's *Fatal Attraction* was released in 1987, that is, back in the times when cinema was still approached indexically, critics saw this film as a representation of the "consequences of infidelity." Such a perspective on *Fatal Attraction* obviously resulted from the critical acknowledgement of its generic provenance of neo-noir. Hinged on subverting the master tropes of classic noir, neo-noir postulated giving up on them as psychological signifiers in favour of reworking these tropes as embodying current social tensions. In so doing, *Fatal Attraction* thus promised the viewers not so much to continue feeling what they so far have felt about the existing ideological divides but rather a perspective of their affective reworking – which never happened because the traditional cinema encouraged a contemplative rather than sensual association with itself.

*Fatal Attraction* (2023) developed into a TV series by the brilliant screenwriter and TV producer Alexandra Cunningham and available on the SkyShowtime streaming platform belongs into cinema's digital age. This means that films made within that format are total (independent), graphic presentations – or sculptures really – of certain perceptions of the outside world the creators of these films are affected by. Is this a game changer for *Fatal Attraction*? I am curious to see how we can approach this story of the "consequences of infidelity" when we decide to "betray", as it were, its traditional critical digestion as a collection of generic/ideological signifiers, reworked, or not, and fall, head over heels, for the film as a certain sensibility. Is this feeling post/human (for attributed also to technology)? – I am going to test this idea analysing both the new and the old *Fatal Attraction*.

MAGDALENA SKRZYŃSKA

### **No Way Out? Streaming Platforms and (Perpetual) Liminal Spaces. A Case Study of Netflix**

In London 1965, at the end of the symposium titled *Ritualization of Behaviour in Animals and Man*, Erik Erikson pondered whether in the future constructed upon new technologies, humans would be capable of existing without the complete and authentic



counterparts of rituals. Fifty-eight years later, Erikson's reflections remain relevant. As a result of technological advancements, streaming platforms have become widespread and the boundaries between physical and virtual spaces seem blurred. I use the word “boundaries” in the plural form deliberately since streaming platforms consuming constitutes a multidimensional process that takes place in multiple spaces. Therefore, users who transition from one space to another cross several thresholds, not just one – which, in turn, creates conditions for experiencing liminal and quasi-liminal states.

When studying liminality, Victor Turner went beyond the rigid framework of ritual – for him, liminality was a state “betwixt and between” socially established categories. Thus, if so, does the streaming platform consuming have to bear the hallmarks of a ritual for the experience of liminal and quasi-liminal states to be possible? I believe not. Liminality, as a separate category, has permeated not only various scientific disciplines but also everyday life, e.g., marital separation or relocation. However, by analyzing how users operate on streaming platforms, one can identify numerous ritual-like elements, and with almost unlimited access to streaming services, available on demand – as encouraged by Netflix with its subscription slogan: “Watch everywhere” – streaming platforms open up the possibility of experiencing perpetual liminality.

BARBARA BRAID

### **Theme park as heterochronia in “Antebellum” (2020)**

Michel Foucault’s notoriously under-conceptualised theory of heterotopic spaces, that is, counter-sites that both reflect and contest real spaces (24) is characterized, among other things, by a peculiar relationship with time. According to Foucault, these “heterotopias are [...] a sort of absolute break with [...] traditional time” (Foucault 26). One of such spaces is theme park, and while, in general, immersive spaces are associated with leisure and enjoyment, gothic texts of culture contrast this expectation with traumatic contexts for the uncanny result. Such an application of a theme park motif is used in a Black horror film “Antebellum” (2020, dir. G. Bush and C. Renz). Initially, it appears to have a double temporal setting: both the nineteenth-century slave Eden in a pre-Civil War plantation and the twenty-first-century scholar Veronica are played by the same actress, Janelle Monáe, thus suggesting time travel. Yet, as the plot progresses, it is revealed that Veronica is Eden, as she had been kidnapped and imprisoned in a historical re-enactment park – a secret club for white supremacist who perform the past with an ambition to turn back the clock to the antebellum South. Thus, Antebellum park is a heterotopic and heterochronic space, where time seems to be frozen in one of the most traumatic moments of American heritage. This paper analyses spatial and temporal settings of the film as a way to engage with its

Afrofuturistic chronopolitics (cf. Hassler-Forest 2022, 16-17) and examines the theme of the past haunting the seemingly post-racial society. I argue that, by applying a theme-park aesthetics, this production offers a reading of Black American experience as a heterochronic emplacement, where time is non-linear and palimpsestic, and a concept of progress toward post-racial society is far from straightforward.

Foucault, Michel. "Of Other Spaces." Transl. Jay Miskoviec. *Diacritics*, vol. 16, no. 1 (1986), pp. 22-27.

Hassler-Forest, Dan. *Janelle Monáe's Queer Afrofuturism: Defying Every Label*. Rutgers University Press, 2022.

**Beata Zawadka** is Associate Professor (dr hab.) in the Institute of Literature and New Media at the University of Szczecin, Poland. She is a literary scholar by education, southernist by specialisation, and an ardent cinephile. At present she teaches mainly film. Her latest (postdoctoral) book entitled *Dis/Reputed Region. Transcoding the U.S. South* was published in 2018. Her next book will be on the reception of digital cinema. She is a member of the Performance International (PSi), IASA, EAAS (PAAS), and of the Southern Studies Forum of the EAAS. Prof. Zawadka has presented at conferences in the European Union and beyond and has also published – in Poland and abroad – on topics linked to her fields of research.

**Magdalena Skrzyńska**, MA, is an Assistant Lecturer in the Institute of Literature and New Media at the University of Szczecin where she teaches practical English and Literature of North America. She is currently working on her doctoral dissertation entitled *Neither Here, Nor There: Liminoid Devices in the American Film and Serial Adaptations*. Her academic interests include: film and series, liminality, streaming services, American history and culture. She has published an article on liminoid filmic devices in *Galicja Studies in Linguistics Literature and Culture: The Students' Voices*, vol. 9. She is a member of the Polish Association for American Studies.

**Barbara Braid**, PhD is Assistant Professor of English Literature in the Institute of Literature and New Media, University of Szczecin, Poland. She specialises in neo-Victorian fiction, film and television adaptation, gothic fiction and queer studies. Her upcoming publication (co-written with dr Anna Gutowska, UJK Kielce) on Emily Dickinson's recent screen biofictions is soon to be published in *Neo-Victorian Studies* journal. She is also currently working on several chapters in handbooks to Neo-Victorianism to be published in Palgrave Macmillan and Brill. Her upcoming monograph project concerns conceptualisation of neo-Victorianism as heterochronic emplacement.

## **Time, space, and memory – Homes and houses in American literary and graphic narratives**

MICHAŁ CHOIŃSKI

### **The Hidden and the Exposed – Homecoming in Gillian Flynn’s *Sharp Objects***

Gillian Flynn’s debut work, *Sharp Objects* features Camille Preaker, a journalist in Chicago’s *The Daily Post* and a recovering self-mutilation addict, who comes back to her hometown, Wind Gap to investigate the case of grizzly murder which shocked the local community. In the novel, Flynn uses the tropes of the domestic noir to explore what Victoria Kennedy describes as the “sense of inescapability of the past and women’s entrapment within social systems that continue to replicate the problems faced by previous generations of women” (2017: 27). Camille’s return as a both an insider and a stranger, allows her to reexamine her problematic relationship with the town, her step-sister and her mother, Adora. Most importantly, she seeks to learn if her return home is possible at all, and the extent to which – as argued by Burger – any attempt at homecoming becomes inevitably failed simply because the returnee’s emotional anchor has never left home in the first place. In my paper, I seek to study the figurative categories of the “inside” and the “outside,” as well as the images of doubles to analyse the way these are employed by Flynn to study the cultural complexities of the Midwest setting of the novel, the dilemmas of return, as well as the protagonist’s personal trauma the grotesque emblems of which are literally engraved in her skin.

Burger, Jerry M. *Returning Home: Reconnecting with Our Childhoods*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011.

Flynn, Gillian. *Sharp Objects*. New York: Crown, 2006.

Kennedy, Victoria. “‘Chick Noir’: Shopaholic Meets Double Indemnity.” *American, British, and Canadian Studies*, vol. 28, June 2017, pp. 19-38.

SOLVEIG DUNKEL

### **William Faulkner's Corridors of Memory**

Southern houses hold a special place in the American imagination. From the former grandeur of plantation houses to the humble simplicity of dogtrot houses, domestic spaces are prevalent in southern literature, perhaps due to the fact that the notions of “house” and “home” can never be divorced from both southern hospitality and the remnants of the slave-based economy. Specifically, William Faulkner’s fictional world, to use Noel Polk’s expression, is a “house-haunted landscape” (*Children of the Dark House* 25), its houses acting as synecdoche of southern history. While the study of the use of different rooms in Faulkner’s fiction is fruitful, I offer here to avert our gaze from rooms to focus on the non-places that connect them—corridors. Indeed, corridors, as opposed to rooms, offer a much more ambiguous image, as Emily Dickinson famously expressed: “One need not be a Chamber – to be Haunted – / One need not be a House – / The Brain has Corridors – surpassing / Material Place –” (J 670). The intricate workings of the psyche are assimilated to a maze-like structure, allowing the mind’s ghosts to roam freely and without halt.

Indeed, as passageways, corridors tend to be disregarded as volumes that need to be crossed to reach somewhere else. To use anthropologist Marc Augé’s neologism, corridors are “non-places:” *spaces* of transience which do not hold enough significance to be regarded as *places*. However, the recurrence of this motif in Faulkner’s fiction seems to suggest that these “non-places” hold an overwhelming amount of poetic meaning.

When Faulkner’s characters find themselves in corridors, the space-time continuum starts to dilate. Rosa Coldfield’s “unpaced corridor which [she] called childhood” (AA 116), Joe Christmas’s “quiet and empty corridor” (LA 119), or Quentin Compson’s “long corridor of gray halfflight where all stable things had become shadowy paradoxical” (SF 103) create a dreamlike experience of liminality, simultaneously emulating feelings of eeriness and peaceful contemplation. This paper aims at analyzing the ambivalent motive of the corridor in Faulkner’s fiction, in which the everyday banalities of corridors become a metaphorical space of defamiliarization and introspection on personal and historical temporalities.

EWA KOWAL

**Housing Time in Two Graphic Narratives: Richard McGuire's *Here* and Chris Ware's *Building Stories***

Authors of graphic narratives and scholars analysing the medium have jointly observed the architectural quality of comic books (Spiegelman 2004; Lydenberg 2012), even recognizing the arrangement of panels on comic pages as “an architecture of time” (Smith 2015). It is thus no accident that graphic narratives often dwell on architectural, and especially domestic spaces, and a number of comics artists have created stories about homes and houses, as, arguably, the medium is uniquely suited to housing them. Two works that will be examined in my paper to prove this point are *Building Stories* by Chris Ware (2012) and *Here* by Richard McGuire (2014). Both American artists focus on individual houses in America yet tell much larger tales, including metareflection on narrative and time, from the eternal present of art to the planet's deep past and deep future. Both authors experiment with the conventions of the comic book medium, radically using its inherently fragmentary, connect-the-dots puzzle-like nature to form highly non-linear, interactive works capturing elusive events and offering polycentric multispecies histories involving human, posthuman or other-than-human points of view. They do this differently, however; and it will be the purpose of my paper to, firstly, explain how, and, secondly, to demonstrate that Ware's and McGuire's spatiotemporal structures rooted in the local, personal and even small engage in visions of global crises: economic, environmental and climate apocalypse – or just constant change, depending on the perspective.

Lydenberg, R. (2012). “Under Construction: Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*.” *European Journal of English Studies* 16(1): “Housing Fiction: The House in Writing and Culture, 1950 to the Present,” J. Larson, F. Saggini and A-E. Soccio, eds., pp. 57-68.

McGuire, R. (2014). *Here*. London: Hamish Hamilton.

Smith, G.M. (2015). “Comics in the Intersecting Histories of the Window, the Frame, and the Panel.” In: D. Stein and J-N Thon, eds., *From Comic Strips to Graphic Novels: Contributions to the Theory and History of Graphic Narrative*. Berlin: De Gruyter, pp. 219-237.

Spiegelman, A. (2004). *In the Shadow of No Towers*. London: Penguin Viking.

Ware, C. (2012). *Building Stories*. New York: Pantheon Books.

**Michał Choiński** – Associate Professor of American Studies at the Jagiellonian University. His academic interests include the literature of the American South, Digital Humanities, and contemporary poetry. Choiński has written two books: *Rhetoric of the Revival* (V&R, 2016) and *Southern Hyperboles* (LSU Press, 2020), and his articles were published in *Polish Journal of American Studies*, *Mississippi Quarterly*, *Amerikastudien*, and *The Southern Quarterly*. Choiński's poetry was published with literary journals in the US, the UK, Germany and in Canada. In 2022, he was a senior Fulbright Fellow at Yale University, working on the manuscript of his third monograph, *Southern Homecomings* (forthcoming with LSU Press).

**Solveig Dunkel** holds a doctoral degree in American literature. Her doctoral thesis is entitled “‘The Old Meat After All’: William Faulkner’s Poetics of the Body,” which she wrote under a joint supervision between the University of Picardy–Jules Verne (France) and Boston University (USA). After having completed a Master of Research at the University of Paris, she passed the *agrégation* of English language, a French competitive state examination. Her work has been published in the *Faulkner Journal* and *The Mississippi Quarterly*. Currently, she serves as a review editor for the *Faulkner Journal* while teaching at Paris Nanterre University (France).

**Ewa Kowal** is Assistant Professor in the Department of Comparative Studies in Literature and Culture in the Institute of English Studies at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland. She is the author of *The “Image-Event” in the Early Post-9/11 Novel: Literary Representations of Terror after September 11, 2001* (2012) and *The Post-Crash Decade of American Cinema: Wall Street, the “Mancession” and the Political Construction of Crisis* (2019), and the co-editor of *The Many Meanings of Home: Cultural Representations of Housing across Media* (2022). Her research interests are feminist studies, gender studies, masculinities studies, housing studies, happiness studies, critical animal studies, film, comics, and the visual arts.

## The Gift of Translation: A Conversation with Polish and American Poet-Translators

The aim of the panel is to bring together celebrated poet-translators from Poland and the United States to talk about the intricacies, challenges, and joys of translating Polish and American poetry. We will delve into the complexities of linguistic and cultural transfers, examining how the act of translation can bridge the gap between and transform literary worlds and traditions. The panelists will share their translation choices, experiences, philosophies, and techniques, shedding light on the intricate decision-making processes and inspirations involved in poetic translation. We will focus also on linguistic and stylistic challenges of source and target languages and cultures that push the poets to experiment with new forms, techniques, and approaches. We will also discuss the interconnectedness of Polish and American poetic traditions and the influence of their work as translators on their own poetry.

Panelists:

**Kacper Bartczak** – Assistant Professor of American Literature and Head of the Department of North American Literature and Culture at the University of Łódź. Author of *In Search of Community of Communication: the Poetry of John Ashbery* (2006), *Świat nie scalony* (2009) and *Materia i autokreacja: dociekania w poetyce wielościowej* (2019). Recipient of the annual “Literatura na Świecie” award for *Świat nie scalony* (2009). He is a poet, with several volumes published. His 2015 collection, *Wiersze organiczne* was finalist in two major Polish literary awards. As a translator of poetry he worked with the poetry of John Ashbery, John Yau, Rae Armantrout, Charles Bernstein, Peter Gizzi. His translations of selected poems by Peter Gizzi appeared in 2013 and 2020. As a result, Peter Gizzi was a guest of the Czesław Miłosz Festival in Kraków in 2020 and 2021. His volume of translations from Rae Armantrout poetry, *Ciemna materia*, appeared in 2018. *Świat w ogniu* was the title of his translations from the poems of Charles Bernstein and it appeared in 2020. He has been a Senior Fulbright Fellow at Princeton University (2010-11) and a Kościuszko Foundation Fellow at Florida Atlantic University (2008). He has been part of jury teams in two Polish literary awards – Juliusz and Tuwim. He is also the author of eight books of poetry, including *Domy mediowe*, *Przenicacy*, *Wiersze organiczne*, 2015, *Pokarm suweren*, *Nawaradiowa* 2019, *Widoki i wymazy*, 2022).

**Julia Fiedorczyk** is a writer, poet, translator, literary critic. She is an associate professor at the Institute of English Studies at the University of Warsaw. Her research interests include ecocriticism, American poetry of the twentieth century, contemporary philosophy, modernism and literary avant-garde, literary theory, psychoanalysis. She is the author of six poetry volumes, including *Listopad nad Narwią*, (2000), *Bio*, (2004). *Planeta rzeczy zagubionych*, (2006); *Tlen*, (2009; *tuż-tuż*, (2012) and *Psalmy* (2018). Her latest book *Psalmy* (*Psalms*) was awarded the Wisława Szymborska Prize, Poland's most prestigious prize for poetry. She was nominated for the Julian Tuwim Award in 2020. She translated numerous American poets into Polish, including Wallace Stevens, John Ashbery, and Laura (Riding) Jackson and Laurie Anderson, and, most recently, Forrest Gander's *Be With*. Her publications include also short stories collections: *Poranek Marii* (Maria's Morning), *Bliskie kraje* (*Close countries*), novels: *Biała Ofelia* (*White Ophelia*), *Nieważkość* (*Weightlessness*; nominated for the Nike Literary Award) and *Pod Słońcem* (*Under the Sun*). Her literary works have been translated into twenty languages, including Japanese and Welsh. She is the author of numerous publications on poetry and ecocriticism, including *Cyborg w ogrodzie: Wprowadzenie do ekokrytyki*" (*Cyborg in the garden: Introduction to ecocriticism*"") and *Ecopoetics*" (in collaboration with the Mexican poet Gerardo Beltrán). Julia Fiedorczyk co-created the program of the School of Ecopoetics at Warsaw's Institute of Reportage.

**Mark Tardi** is a writer and translator whose recent awards include a 2023 PEN/Heim Translation Grant and a 2022 National Endowment for the Arts Translation fellowship. He is the author of three books, most recently, *The Circus of Trust* (Dalkey Archive Press, 2017), and his translations of *The Squatters' Gift* by Robert Rybicki (Dalkey Archive Press) and *Faith in Strangers* by Katarzyna Szaulińska (Toad Press/Veliz Books) were published in 2021. Recent writing and translations have appeared in *Czas Kultury*, *Tupelo Quarterly*, *Denver Quarterly*, *The Scores*, *Full Stop*, *Poetry Northwest*, *The Millions*, *Interim*, *Circumference*, *Another Chicago Magazine*, *Berlin Quarterly*, and in the edited volumes, *Odmiany Łapania Tchu* (Dom Literatury w Łodzi, 2022), *New Voices: Contemporary Writers Confront the Holocaust* (Valentine Mitchell, 2023), and *The Experiment Will Not Be Bound* (Unbound Edition Press, 2023). *Viscera: Eight Voices from Poland* is forthcoming from Litmus Press in 2024. He is on faculty at the University of Łódź.

Panel chair: **Paulina Ambroży** is associate professor and Head of American Literature Department at the Faculty of English, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland. Her research centers on American (more recently also Canadian and Polish) avantgarde and experimental poetry. She is interested in intersections between poetry, literary philosophy, science and the visual arts. She is the author of *(Un)concealing the Hedgehog: Modernist American Poets and Contemporary Critical Theories* (Poznań, 2012), which received the 2014 American Studies Network Book Prize for remarkable research in American studies, and which focused on Marianne Moore, Wallace Stevens, Gertrude Stein, William Carlos



Williams and Mina Loy. With Liliana Sikorska, Joanna Jarząb-Napierała and Marta Frątczak-Dąbrowska she has authored *Between the Self and the Other: Essays on the Poetry of Paul Muldoon* (2018), a study which fuses four perspectives: autobiographical, geopoetic, postcolonial and intertextual. Her current book project is devoted to intermediality and provisionally titled *Turn of the Sign: Crisis of Representation in American Poetry and the Visual Arts*. Concurrently, she is working on a comparative project involving posthumanist approaches to the North American and Polish lyric.

## Reappraising Joan Didion

TADEUSZ PIÓRO

### **The Southern Pacific Railroad and the Origins of Neo-Liberalism in Joan Didion's *Where I Was From***

In her autobiographical, book-length essay *Where I Was From*, Joan Didion sets her family's history against the history of the economic development of California. Her family belonged to the first wave of settlers from the East, contemporaries of the tragically storied Donner – Reed party. They were among the creators of the ethos of California pioneers, as well as of a mythos which Didion investigates in her book and finds largely irrelevant to the state's economic history and cultural identity or self-definition. The Southern Pacific Railroad, the first rail connection to areas east of the Sierra Nevada and thus, in effect, the principal gateway to California, serves as a literal and symbolic negation of the pioneering ethos and mythos, because of the role of the federal government in financing its construction. This great engineering achievement set the pattern for future infrastructural developments across the state in that they were usually financed by “outsiders”: either federal authorities or private venture capitalists. The ethos, and myth, of self-reliance Didion was brought up believing in, are exposed as a fiction it took her at least forty years to even begin to question. A certain pathos is therefore present in her revelations, as if the hard economic and socio-political facts she presents in a detailed and well-researched way, were indiscretions about her family's and her own ingenuousness, and not the basic truths about neo-liberalism, a term she never uses in this book. My focus in the presentation will be on this manner of self-revelation within a political and economic context: Didion's critique of the decline of California always ends or starts with an admission of her own naivete, but the reasons for this naivete are never analyzed as thoroughly as the reasons for the state's economic and cultural decline.

ELŻBIETA HORODYSKA

### ***Play It as It Lays: Navigating an Atmosphere Without Gravity***

In her essay “Why I Write,” Joan Didion informs that before writing *Play It as It Lays*, she had two pictures in her mind: one of a young woman in a short dress in a casino in Las Vegas and another of white space. Taking these two images under consideration,

this paper argues that the novel is their expansion in that the casino is a metaphor of a toxic environment in which the heroine is immersed, and white space, on the one hand, stands for the emptiness she feels in connection with the breakdown of communication with the world around her and, on the other, represents Didion's method of organizing the narrative, leaving out vital content for the reader to reconstruct. The paper proposes to perceive the heroine's growing alienation as an effect of a complex process of gaslighting by both her film director husband and, on a different level, by the myth of the American Dream supposed to materialize in The West. Maria's discomfort as a participant of the film production industry in Hollywood is also caused by the way she is looked at. In support of this proposal, the paper invokes the significance of Hegel's influential view of the superiority of vision over other senses on modern aesthetics and Luce Irigaray's postmodern response to Hegel, whose widely accepted concept has had consequences in the way it dematerializes the body. As an actress, a woman "bound by the frame" (Owens) in her director husband's vision, Maria experiences acute anxiety as someone who exists only as an image and not as a physical, independent being.

MAREK PARYŻ

**"A Romance of the Tropics": Joan Didion in 1980s Miami**

The paper will discuss key narrative strategies in Joan Didion's 1987 non-fiction book *Miami*. This work is concerned with various forms of the political activity of the Cuban diaspora in the eponymous city in the early and mid-1980s. Didion does not aim to present a synthesis of a complex socio-political situation; instead of an ordering and hierarchizing narration, she registers a series of symptoms, the significance of which is not always apparent. From the very first pages, Didion emphasizes the unreal or irrational manifestations of life in Miami, as if its reality had as much to do with fantasies as with a concrete social microcosm. This is not to say that the writer loses touch with the objective reality; rather, she comes to see its dreamlike dimension as its inherent element. A symptomatic shift characterizes Didion's narration in *Miami*: while the opening chapters noticeably rely on defamiliarizing descriptions, the tone subsequently becomes matter-of-fact. In this way Didion emphasizes the influence of myths, fantasies or projections on shaping collective views and attitudes as well as the resulting actions.

**Tadeusz Pióro** is the author of *Funtime, Endtime: Reading Frank O'Hara* (Peter Lang 2017) and *Szkice o sztuce przekładu i sztuce czytania* (Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego 2019). He co-edited, with Marek Paryż, a collection of critical essays about Thomas Pynchon. He is also a poet and translator, most recently of Mina Loy's "Love Songs" (*Literatura na Świecie* 1-2/2023). He teaches at the Institute of English Studies at the University of Warsaw.

**Elżbieta Horodyska** is a Ph.D. candidate at the Institute of English Studies of the University of Warsaw. Her thesis focuses on the analysis of a selection of Jim Harrison's novels and short stories about the West from the perspective of critical regionalism.

**Marek Paryż** is an associate professor of American literature at the Institute of English Studies, University of Warsaw and the chief editor of the *Polish Journal of American Studies*. His current research focuses on the Western across narrative arts. He has recently co-edited a collection of essays titled *The Western in the Global Literary Imagination* (with Christopher Conway and David Rio, Brill 2022).

## **Rethinking the American East: Unearthing the Frontier Renaissance**

This panel introduces the concept of the Frontier Renaissance to challenge the conventional understanding of American national literature's formative ground as originating in New England cultural institutions. Between the late 19<sup>th</sup> and mid-20<sup>th</sup> centuries, numerous attempts were made to establish an American literary history, placing New England in the center and identifying Puritanism or Transcendentalism as the origin of American literary culture. Even F.O. Matthiessen's *American Renaissance*, which reconceptualized American 19<sup>th</sup>-century literature through the lens of the principle of democracy, could still be seen as a regionalist undertaking that focused exclusively on Northeastern writers. Although Henry Nash Smith, in *Virgin Land* (1950) offered an alternative perspective that looked westward to define American literary culture, the idea that the national literature was represented by one region has largely been left unchallenged.

Following the lead of recent scholarship that has made regions transnational, including work by Paul Giles and Anna Brickhouse, the paradigm of the Frontier Renaissance embraces the significance of transnational and transtemporal perspectives, and regards the eastern US as a temporal and spatial contact zone. Through the exploration of the works of Samuel Sewall (Puritan literature), Nathaniel Hawthorne (literature of the American Renaissance), Harriet Beecher Stowe (regionalist literature), and F.O. Matthiessen, this panel sheds light on the ways in which the transnational/transtemporal dimension of Northeastern US literature interrupts reductionist regional and national perspectives.

The panel's points of investigation include a Puritan missionary's visionary realm of Israel and the American South, reconsiders transnational cultural transfer in "Realism," explores Hawthorne's travels through space and time, and delves into Matthiessen's imaginary palimpsest of the American West and Czechoslovakia. Through these explorations, the panel highlights contact zones that complicated the formation of an American literature and offers an alternative understanding of American national literature within transtemporal and transnational contexts.

Chair and panelist: **Mikayo Sakuma** is professor of American Literature at Gakushuin Women's College, Tokyo, Japan. She was a recipient of Fulbright Research Grant and a visiting scholar at Harvard University in 2014. Having researched American isolationism's

influence on the nineteenth-century literature, she currently focuses on Japanese comic adaptation of *Moby-Dick* in socio-historical approach. Her books include *From Person to People: Revolution of American National Literature* (2020) and *Rethinking Early America: Peoples, Reforms, and Writings in Perspective* (2023). She published articles on Puritans and Herman Melville, including “Rethinking Cultural Awareness Toward Nature: Oriental Animals in Herman Melville’s *Clarel*” (*Pacific Coast Philology*, 2015)

Panelist: **Makiko Wakabayashi** is PhD (SUNY at Buffalo) and professor of American Literature at Aoyama Gakuin University, Tokyo, Japan. She is currently working on grant-in-aid projects on the history of New York literature, tracing its development from the Dutch period and observing its contribution to the formation of national literature in America. Her publication includes “Regional Conflicts in the Formative Period of National Literature: Geopolitics of Catherine Maria Sedgwick’s America in *The Linwoods*” (2017) and “A Historical Consciousness Called “pre-railroad times”—Harriet Beecher Stowe and American Regional Writings” (2023).

Panelist: **Masahiro Uehara** is professor of English at Senshu University, Tokyo, Japan, where he teaches the English language and American culture. Having done his graduate work at New York University as a recipient of Fulbright Graduate Grant, his academic interest has extended from the nineteenth-century American novels to modern Japanese literature, and is now focusing on an ecological reading of American romance and a Japanese Nobel-prize laureate Oe Kenzaburo. His publications on American novels include “When a Voice Becomes a Character: Questioning a Northwestern-Newberry Emendation of Chapter 114 in *Moby-Dick*” (2013) and “Soldiers’ Pay: Herman Melville’s *Israel Potter*” (2018).

Panelist: **Maki Sadahiro** is professor of American Literature at Meiji Gakuin University, Tokyo, Japan. She was a recipient of Fulbright Graduate Grant (2006-07), and received a PhD in English from the State University of New York at Buffalo. She earned a Fulbright Research Grant to conduct research at Columbia University in 2019. Her recent research focus is on the institutionalization of American literature and the formation of American literary history. Her publication includes “Fin-de-Siècle British Socialism and a Prelude to the Melville Revival” (*Leviathan*, 2020), and “Melville’s Twentieth-Century Revivals” (*A New Companion to Herman Melville*, Wiley-Blackwell, 2022).

**Individual  
submissions  
in alphabetical order**

ACADIA LILITH

## **Prescient Plague Fiction: How Near-Future US SciFi Anticipated Corporate Pandemic Profiteering**

In the first two years of covid-19, Oxfam reports, “The world’s ten richest men more than doubled their fortunes [while] the incomes of 99 percent of humanity f[ell].” That powerful corporations would exploit crisis to enrich themselves will be no surprise to readers of recent near-future US plague fiction.

This paper reads two such prescient literary works. Sarah Pinsker’s *A Song for a New Day* critiques how music corporations exploit anti-assembly laws during a pandemic strikingly similar to covid-19, subsequently monopolizing the music industry, stifling creativity while amassing ever more profit. Paolo Bacigalupi’s *The Windup Girl* grapples with ethical implications of agribusiness lucratively controlling global food systems following a devastating agricultural plague, and considering the globalizing potential of widening corporate power following such a crisis. In contrast to Ling Ma’s *Severance* or Annalee Newitz’s *Autonomous*, which critique corporate responses during epidemics, Pinsker and Bacigalupi’s novels look beyond the crisis to imagine how business might capitalize on disasters to increase their power into the future.

Tracing how corporations profiteer and grow from human and climate plagues, both novels demonstrate what Naomi Klein in *Shock Doctrine* dubs “disaster capitalism.” Lawrence Wright’s *The Plague Year* delves into how these dynamics and socioeconomic shifts impacted specifically covid-19. Reading Pinsker and Bacigalupi’s novels in light of Klein’s theorizing and Wright’s socio-economic commentary, this paper argues that, beyond exploiting a crisis, plagues are moments of a very American transition, whereby corporations exploit crisis to change paradigms for even more drastic long-term power and profit.

Dr. **Lilith Acadia** is an Assistant Professor of Literary Studies at National Taiwan University, funded by the Taiwan National Science and Technology Council. Dr. Acadia has a PhD in Rhetoric from Berkeley, received fellowships including Fulbright and Marie Curie, has recently published academic articles on Taiwanese queer modernism, orientalism in animation, religious pretext and Anzaldúa, queer theory, and xenophilia.



ADAMCZEWSKI TYMON

## **Beyond Space, Beyond Time: The Material Ecologies of Richard McGuire's *Here***

Using the book's material dimensions, Richard McGuire's graphic novel *Here* (2014) presents an intriguing story of a single physical space stretching over the course of three billion years. It uses the corner of a room, physically always at the centre of a two-page spread, as an anchor-point for representations of different moments in time. By establishing such space-time connections and by offering combinations between the visual elements co-existing on a page, these criss-crossing narratives allow in a way to cut through time and explore different, hyper-objective temporalities and perspectives usually inaccessible to humans (Morton 2013). Given the physical grounding of events, always taking place *h e r e* yet, simultaneously, reaching out far into the past and the future, it is possible to read McGuire's graphic novel as an exercise in thinking with speculative realism and object-oriented ontology (Harman 2018a, 2018b). Employing the propositions of these orientations – particularly regarding the role of aesthetics as a mode allowing for *imagining* and perhaps articulating the aspects of objects that otherwise always remain withdrawn and hidden from human reach, or as a meditation on how to think through non-anthropocentric modes of interreacting with the world – I propose to look into the very materiality that comes with staging such more-than-human position for the readers. This will include thinking through the links between the non-standard modes of representing temporalities and space, with special reference to the material ecologies of physical objects and activates *Here* is inspired by (e.g., the physical space of a corner of a room vs. the passage of time; the book and the printed page as objects).

Harman, Graham. *Speculative Realism: An Introduction*. Polity Press, 2018a.

Harman, Graham. *Object-Oriented Ontology: A New Theory of Everything*. Pelican Books, 2018b.

McGuire, Richard. *Here*. London: Penguin, 2021.

Morton, Timothy. *Hyperobjects. Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World*. University of Minnesota Press, 2013.

**Tymon Adamczewski** is university professor at the Department of Anglophone Literatures of Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz, Poland, where he teaches literary and cultural studies. He has recently edited a monograph entitled *All Along Bob Dylan: America and the World*

(Routledge 2020) and is the author of *Following the Textual Revolution: The Standardization of Radical Critical Theories of the 1960s* (McFarland 2016), as well as a number of articles published in various international academic venues (e.g. JPMS, AVANT, Image [&] Narrative, NJES). His interests include critical discourses of contemporary humanities, experimental literature, ecocriticism, and music.

AGHAYEV ORKHAN

## **Racist, Terrorist, or Activist? Beyoncé's Artivism and the Power of Imagination**

Using the book's material dimensions, Richard McGuire's graphic novel *Here* (2014) presents an intriguing story of a single physical space stretching over the course of three billion years. It uses the corner of a room, physically always at the centre of a two-page spread, as an anchor-point for representations of different moments in time. By establishing such space-time connections and by offering combinations between the visual elements co-existing on a page, these criss-crossing narratives allow in a way to cut through time and explore different, hyper-objective temporalities and perspectives usually inaccessible to humans (Morton 2013). Given the physical grounding of events, always taking place *h e r e* yet, simultaneously, reaching out far into the past and the future, it is possible to read McGuire's graphic novel as an exercise in thinking with speculative realism and object-oriented ontology (Harman 2018a, 2018b). Employing the propositions of these orientations – particularly regarding the role of aesthetics as a mode allowing for *imagining* and perhaps articulating the aspects of objects that otherwise always remain withdrawn and hidden from human reach, or as a meditation on how to think through non-anthropocentric modes of interreacting with the world – I propose to look into the very materiality that comes with staging such more-than-human position for the readers. This will include thinking through the links between the non-standard modes of representing temporalities and space, with special reference to the material ecologies of physical objects and activates *Here* is inspired by (e.g., the physical space of a corner of a room vs. the passage of time; the book and the printed page as objects).

This abstract explores the complex and multifaceted nature of Beyoncé's artivism, examining the transformative potential of imagination and creativity in her artistry and its impact on decolonization. Drawing inspiration from critical theorist Gayatri Spivak's notion of imagination, the paper emphasizes the significance of envisioning alternative futures and challenging established norms. Through literature and creative expression, individuals engage with diverse perspectives, shaping narratives in the face of dominant ideologies.

Beyoncé's "Renaissance World Tour" highlights imagination through Albert Einstein's quote "Imagination is more important than knowledge," using the Einstein-Rosen bridge as a visual representation. Over the years, by paying homage to the past and crafting a platform for resistance, Beyoncé invites people of all races to explore

perspectives imaginatively. In Gayatri Spivak's "Aesthetic Education," she delves into "affirmative sabotage," transforming sabotage into a tool for repurposing. Beyoncé's unapologetic embrace of her black identity serves as a compelling manifestation of this affirmative sabotage. Critics have controversially labeled her as a "terrorist," "racist," and "activist" due to the provocative impact of her artworks and even her moments of deliberate silence.

However, it is through her art that Beyoncé wields a potent political tool, actively contributing to social movements that prioritize putting decolonization on the agenda at both national and global scales. Overall, Beyoncé's activism exemplifies the power of imagination to shape alternative narratives and challenge prevailing perspectives. Through creativity, she invites audiences to "enter the text of the Other" and confront social, environmental, and political issues.

**Orkhan Aghayev** completed a Master's degree in Cultural Studies at the University of Lodz in Poland. He focused on colonial studies, with a specific focus on the artistry of Beyoncé as a tool for decolonization. Orkhan's research centers on the exploration of how artworks can challenge and deconstruct the colonial legacy.

BALLENGEE CHRISTOPHER L.

## **From Harry Belafonte to the Kingston Trio: Claiming Authenticity and Performing Blackness during the U.S. Calypso Craze, 1940s-1960s**

In this paper, I locate music of the calypso craze as both a whitewashed fad and simultaneously as a vitally important means for black performers to discover and connect with African roots and the wider African diaspora.

Calypso is an African Trinidadian musical genre foundational to the traditional Trinidadian Carnival soundscape. A genre Trinidadians equally admire for its catchy rhythms as for its biting social commentary, calypso has often been misconstrued as lighthearted folk music by outsiders. Such was the case when calypso entered the American popular music mainstream first in the 1940s, then again with a massive craze in the late 1950s. Most listeners are perhaps best acquainted with calypso via Harry Belafonte's 1956 album *Calypso* (and its many imitators) that saw tropes of calypso embedded in all corners of American popular culture from dime novels to Hollywood films, offering audiences a safe vision of the Caribbean characterized by cultural stereotypes and largely fictional locales at once luxurious and provincial.

Despite such skewed visions of the Caribbean, black performers found a place within this exoticism, and on their own terms. While most American pop acts emphasized the kitsch of calypso over its more serious side, some black performers found a new authenticity in calypso that validated African roots and spoke to the experience of the African diaspora. I demonstrate this through key examples including music by the Andrews Sisters, Harry Belafonte, Maya Angelou (performing as "Miss Calypso"), and the Kingston Trio among others.

**Christopher L. Ballengee** is an ethnomusicologist and Lecturer in the American Literature and Culture Department at John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin. He has researched Indian music in Trinidad and the Trinidadian community in Florida since 2007 and was the inaugural Diego Carpitella Visual Ethnomusicology fellow at the Giorgio Cini Foundation (Venice, Italy) which supported the production of the feature-length documentary film *Sweet Tassa: Music of the Indian Caribbean Diaspora* (2019). He is editor of the volume *Music, Sound, and Documentary Film in the Global South* (2022) and co-editor of the Music and Sound in Visual Media series at Lexington Books.

BELENETSKYI ANTON

## **“The World Was Rearranging Itself Around Me”: Deepening the Anthropocenic Present in Jenny Offill’s *Weather* and Ben Lerner’s *10:04***

The Anthropocene can be briefly summarized as a vertiginous realization and a radical reorganization of the planetary relations: primarily, between the human and the nonhuman; yet also between the hitherto streamlined and thus separated temporalities of the past, the present, and the future. This paper is concerned with how and to what effect such realization, which Lynn Keller aptly defines as the “self-consciousness” of the Anthropocene, may trouble the now-omnipresent Eurocentric perception of time as the teleological, homogenized and homogenizing, rule of the mechanical clock, standardized and conventionalized by the ascent of capitalism in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Not accidentally, this is also the time that is commonly proposed to date the beginning of the Anthropocene (or the Capitalocene, as Donna Haraway, Jason Moore, and many other scholars insist on calling this particular iteration of the Earth’s geo-ecological rearrangement). Drawing on Jenny Odell’s critique of contemporary U.S. capitalism’s “attention economy” and her insight that “rerouting and deepening one’s attention to place” may raise “awareness of one’s participation in history and in a more-than-human community,” the paper studies the experiences and imaginaries of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century U.S. “blasted landscape of neoliberal determinism” as represented in Ben Lerner’s 2014 *10:04* and Jenny Offill’s 2020 *Weather*. The paper thus intends to elucidate how these two poetical novels employ various literary strategies of engaging with the present-day runaway temporal acceleration in order to deepen its seeming shallowness and point towards how one can meaningfully inhabit the tangles of the Anthropocene’s present and coexist with the uncertainties of its futures.

Haraway, Donna J. 2016. *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*. Durham, NC: Duke UP.

Keller, Lynn. 2018. *Recomposing Eco-poetics: North American Poetry of the Self-Conscious Anthropocene*. Charlottesville, VA: U of Virginia P.

Lerner, Ben. 2014/2015. *10:04*. London, UK: Granta Books.

Moore, Jason W. (Ed.). 2016. *Anthropocene or Capitalocene? Nature, History, and the Crisis of Capitalism*. Oakland, CA: PM Press.

Odell, Jenny. 2019. *How to Do Nothing: Resisting the Attention Economy*. Brooklyn, NY: Melville House Publishing.

Offill, Jenny. 2020/2021. *Weather*. New York, NY: Vintage.

As a III year doctoral student at the Doctoral School in the Humanities of the Jagiellonian University, **Anton Belenetskyi** is currently working on a Ph.D. thesis concerning uncertainty and other affective experiences of the Anthropocene in post-2000 U.S. and Canadian literature. His main academic interests lie in the intersection of new materialisms, ecocriticism, and affect studies. Outside academia, he spends his free time rearing (and being reared by) house plants.

BRYLA MARTYNA

## **Chekhov in the Times of Lockdown: Gary Shteyngart's *Our Country Friends* as a "Fable of Our Broken Time"**

Inspired by the theme of the 2023 PAAS Conference, this paper approaches *Our Country Friends* (2021) by Russian-American author Gary Shteyngart as a novel which is at once atemporal and painfully contemporary. The novel partakes in the tradition of plague/pandemic narratives by chronicling the inner lives and interactions of a group of individuals invited by Sasha Senderovsky, a Russian-American writer and "landowner," to spend the COVID19 lockdown on his rural estate in upstate New York. As the peculiar situation of lockdown puts the lives of the characters on standby, they are forced to look inward and confront emotions which they would not address otherwise. As a result, conflicts erupt, friends are betrayed, and new romantic configurations emerge in the microcosm of Senderovsky's rural setting, while the contagion keeps wreaking havoc around the world. As in Anton Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya* (1898), the novel's main intertext and Shteyngart's nod to his transnational legacy, the country house becomes a laboratory for exploring themes which are as universal as it gets: love, friendship, loneliness, and existential longings. At the same time, Shteyngart directs the reader's gaze towards other ailments tormenting contemporary America in addition to the raging virus: intrusive nationalism under Donald Trump's dysfunctional rule, ongoing racial tensions exacerbated by George Floyd's death at the hands of a white police officer, and the viral violence of "cancel culture." Ultimately, this paper suggests that Shteyngart's engagement with contemporary America in *Our Country Friends* is embedded within a broader global context and literary tradition, which the author sources for aesthetic effect and intertextual insight to produce, in Salman Rushdie's words, "a powerful fable of our broken time."

**Martyna Bryla** has an MA in English Philology from the Jagiellonian University in Kraków and a PhD in English Studies from the University of Málaga in Spain, where she works as an assistant professor. Her research interests include literary imagology, particularly in relation to East-Central Europe, and the construction of selfhood and otherness in multinational contexts. She has published articles and book chapters on the imaginative geographies of the European East in the fiction of Philip Roth, John Updike, and Joyce Carol Oates, among others. Her latest research is concerned with Gary Shteyngart's transnational writing.



BURÁKOVÁ ZUZANA

## Traversing the Time in Cormac McCarthy's Fiction

The following paper examines the incorporation of deep time in the fiction of Cormac McCarthy (1933-2023), ranging from his local depictions of the southwestern landscape in *Blood Meridian Or The Evening Redness in the West* (1985) to the exploration of more transient borderlandscapes in *No Country for Old Men* (2005) and culminating in a post-apocalyptic setting in *The Road* (2006). The shift in the depiction of landscapes aligns with metamodernistic concepts of oscillation, as proposed by Vermeulen and Akker, within the framework of metamodernism (2010). McCarthy's utilization of these concepts predates their formal articulation, highlighting his engagement with metamodernist themes. Additionally, the paper focuses on the metamodernist concept of the artist as a homo viator, a prototype of the contemporary traveler who traverses various signs and formats (Bourrioud, 2009). McCarthy's portrayal of characters navigating landscapes reflects a contemporary experience of mobility, travel, and traversing, echoing the metamodernist sensibilities associated with the concept of deep time. Ultimately, this analysis contributes to a deeper understanding of McCarthy's literary achievements within the metamodernist framework and sheds light on the significance of deep time in his storytelling.

Bourriaud, Nicholas. *Altermodern Manifesto: Postmodernism is Dead*. In Rudrum, D., Stavris, N. (eds.) *Supplanting the Postmodern: An Anthology of Writings on the Arts and Culture of the Early 21st Century*, 255-269. Bloomsbury: New York; London.

Timotheus Vermeulen & Robin van den Akker (2010) *Notes on Metamodernism*. In *Journal of Aesthetics & Culture*. Accessed October 29, 2020. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.3402/jac.v2i0.5677>.

**Zuzana Buráková** is an assistant professor at Pavol Jozef Safarik University in Košice, Slovakia. She teaches courses on literary theory, the history of American literature, and American ethnic literatures at the Department of British and American Studies. She is a co-author of the monograph *Reflection of Trauma in Selected Works of Postwar American and British Literature* (2010, Pavol Jozef Safarik University) and has published papers in the collections *Growing Up a Woman* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing) and *Representations of the Local in the Postmillennial Novel: New Voices from the Margins* (2022). Her research interests include Jewish American literature, trauma studies, and the works of Cormac McCarthy. She is a member of Czech and Slovak association for American Studies.

DOBROGOSZCZ TOMASZ

## Metabolizing the Trauma in Selected Contemporary Eco-fiction

The proposed paper analyses three recent American/Canadian ecologically situated novels – Michael Christie’s *Greenwood* (2020), Richard Powers’s *Bewilderment* (2021), and Anthony Doerr’s *Cloud Cuckoo Land* (2021). My theoretical framework is located on the intersection of trauma theory and posthumanist studies. The traumatizing effects of the global threats developed during the Anthropocene are of twofold nature, pertaining to the past and the future. Addressing the issue of mourning for human-inflicted destruction and obliteration, Karen Barad talks about the “the im/possibility of metabolizing the trauma [and] transforming the self from victim to survivor.” Barad postulates the ethics based on the state of profound and unresolvable discomfort, the strategy “of un/doing the self, of touching oneself through touching all others,” which resonates with Donna Haraway’s project of “staying with the trouble” or Rosi Braidotti’s “ethics of becoming-imperceptible.” The future perspective, in turn, is represented by E. Ann Kaplan, who studies dystopian film and fiction from the perspective of the “pretraumatic stress syndrome” (PreTSS), a paralysing anxiety about the future disaster evoked by the scenarios of the near Apocalypse, permeating today’s literature, film and media. My paper investigates the traumatic/traumatising elements in the three selected novels, trying to discuss the literary strategies used by their authors in order to raise/strengthen the readers’ ecological awareness.

**Tomasz Dobrogoszcz** works as associate professor at the Department of British Literature and Culture, University of Lodz. His main fields of research include contemporary British and postcolonial literature, poststructuralist and psychoanalytical literary theory, contemporary film and culture studies. He has published on such writers as Julian Barnes, Ian McEwan, Kazuo Ishiguro, Salman Rushdie, Ali Smith and Jeanette Winterson. He is the editor of *Nobody Expects the Spanish Inquisition: Cultural Contexts In Monty Python* (2014). He also published a monograph *Family and Relationships in Ian McEwan’s Fiction* (2018). He translated into Polish a seminal work in postcolonial theory, *The Location of Culture* by Homi K. Bhabha, and other critical and literary texts, for instance, by Hayden White or Dipesh Chakrabarty.

DUDEK MATEUSZ

## **Dina Nayeri's *The Ungrateful Refugee*: Migration in between Narratives, Temporalities, and Identities**

In my presentation, I discuss *The Ungrateful Refugee: What Immigrants Never Tell You* (2019) by Dina Nayeri, an Iranian-American writer. Nayeri narrates her “hyphenated” identity as developing in between countries, religions, Iranian and American myths, and within transnational and liminal spaces. Even though Nayeri initially views her refugee experience as disrupting her temporality and rupturing her sense of continuity, she can transform it into an opportunity to refigure her narrative identity and construct new, reparative self-constancy, as in the Ricoeurian type of ipse identity (Ricoeur 1988: 246-247; 1992: 114-116). As she weaves together her personal narrative with her family memoir and several other stories of refugees, she comments on non-Western narrative patterns and Iranian storytelling customs, which are inequitably considered non-standard and incoherent by Western immigration officials. Nayeri uses several techniques that distinguish her narrative, such as straying into digressions and incorporating fragments of reportage and storytelling.

The title of Nayeri's book provokes a discussion on who is considered a “good immigrant” and what attitude “the ungrateful refugee” can take to protect their integrity and identity in the refugee camp and in the “host” society. Nayeri employs a rebellious, persistent voice and a sarcastic style to defy the social discourse that almost inconspicuously shapes expectations of immigrant “gratitude”. Although she struggles to come to terms with her refugeehood in Italy and immigration to the United States, she recognises national and ethnic differences and celebrates them as an element of hybrid, transnational life that does not have to divide people.

Nayeri, Dina. 2020. *The Ungrateful Refugee: What Migrants Never Tell You*. Edinburgh: Canongate Books.

Ricoeur, Paul. 1988. *Time and Narrative*. Vol. 3. Chicago–London: The University of Chicago Press.

Ricoeur, Paul. 1992. *Oneself as Another*. Chicago–London: The University of Chicago Press.

**Mateusz Dudek** obtained his MA degree at the Department of English, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń. He continues his academic education as a doctoral student at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. His research concentrates on analysing the issues of narrative and cultural identity in contemporary diasporic literature. His publications include: “2084. The End of

the World. Subjectivity and Power in Boualem Sansal's Vision of an Islamist Totalitarian Society" (in *Faces of Crisis in 20th- and 21st-Century Prose. An Anthology of Criticism*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2020) and "Krik? Krak! and Brother, I'm Dying by Edwidge Danticat: The Transnational Experience of Haitian Refugees" (*Archiwum Emigracji* 28, 2020) as well as "Identity and transnationalism: Narrating the Haitian-American home in selected works by Edwidge Danticat" (*Crossroads. A Journal of English Studies* 36, 2022).

DYBSKA ANETA

## **Black Reparations in the U.S. and International Human Rights Law**

The Black reparations movement in the U.S. is made up of diverse grassroots and political initiatives, some anchored in the black nationalist tradition, others in civil rights activism. I would like to focus on the strand of Black reparations activism that considers itself to be part of a global movement for reparations built around a collective Pan-African identity. It brings together members of the post-colonial African and Caribbean counties, as well as black reparations activists from Great Britain and in the U.S., united around the experience of slavery and racial subordination (Henry 2007). This local reparations struggle in the U.S. draws on international human rights law standards as its legal and political foundation, and is an outgrowth of solidarities and alliances forged within the African diaspora via the United Nations forum in the late 1990s and the early 2000s.

My paper will explore the concept of reparative justice as articulated in the UN guidelines and principles on the right to remedy and reparations for gross human rights violations (Walker 2010). Then I will analyze select U.S.-based examples of legislative action supporting reparations for slavery and its enduring legacies that international human rights framework as a point of reference. I will show how reparations activism in the U.S. has been broadening the understanding of what constitutes reparations by moving beyond the narrow definition of harm redress rooted in the corrective justice model.

**Aneta Dybska**, PhD, teaches at the Institute of English Studies since 2006. Her research interests focus on 19th and 20th c. American city, race, ethnicity, biopolitics of the nation and black social movements. Her 2016 book *Regeneration, Citizenship, and Justice in the American City since the 1970s* engages scholarly debates on urban revitalization and gentrification, theorizations of the “right to the city” idea, as well as grassroots struggles for the urban commons. This research builds on her earlier interest in 1960s urban ethnography on black communities, which culminated in the publication of *Black Masculinities in American Social Science and Self-Narratives of the 1960s and 1970s* (Peter Lang, 2010). She is currently working on a new project on the Black reparations movement and restorative justice. She is a member of *The Cultural Politics of Reconciliation* international scholarly network, affiliated with the Catholic University of Eichstaett-Ingolstadt, Germany.

FERENS DOMINIKA

## Sigrid Nunez's Imagined Literary Community

In 1996, the Asian American Studies community embraced an unknown mixed-race author named Sigrid Nunez as a promising new voice, awarding her the literature prize at the annual conference in Washington, D.C. The book that brought Nunez this distinction was *A Feather on the Breath of God*, a fictionalized memoir whose first two sections focused on the narrator's Chinese father and German mother respectively. But her career proved to be a disappointment for Asian Americanists because henceforth she wrote about unraced or white narrators and protagonists, and she sought inspirations far beyond Asian America. The disappointment is most apparent in Jennifer Ho's 2015 study *Racial Ambiguities in Asian American Culture*. Although Ho insists that "the study of Asian American literature should be virulently antiessentialist," she draws a firm line when it comes to authors who write fiction "without an attention to any legible or discernible Asian American community" (135), and who do not "push[] the boundaries of Asian American epistemology" (141). Nunez's homepage appears to confirm Ho's claims, for it lists every award this acclaimed author has received, other than the 1996 AAAS book award. My paper is an attempt to trace Nunez's transnational literary inspirations – her imagined community – from Virginia Woolf, Anton Chekhov, Rainer Maria Rilke, and Simone Weil to W. G. Sebald, Inger Christensen, and V.S. Nipaul, in order to ask how intellectual cosmopolitanism relates to the idea of community, and whether, by a stretch, Nunez can be said to "push[] the boundaries of Asian American epistemology."

**Dominika Ferens** is associate professor at the Institute of English Studies, University of Wrocław, Poland, where she teaches American literature. Much of her research has focused on issues of race, gender, and sexuality. In *Edith and Winnifred Eaton: Chinatown Missions and Japanese Romances* (2002), she examined the paradoxes of Orientalism in the work of two writers of Chinese-English-Canadian descent. Her book *Ways of Knowing Small Places: Intersections of American Literature and Ethnography since the 1960s* (2011) looked at literature's quarrels and affinities with ethnography in the age of multiculturalism. She is currently exploring the writings of Sigrid Nunez through affect theory. A co-founder of the Interdisciplinary Gender Studies Group at the University of Wrocław and co-editor of *InterAlia*, an open-access queer studies journal, she has been instrumental in legitimating gender and queer studies in Poland.

FILIPCZAK IWONA

## **Re-Orientalist tropes in Akhil Sharma's *A Life of Adventure and Delight* (2017)**

As diasporic fiction is believed to reveal the dominance of female protagonists and it is the female experience that is foregrounded and considered as crucial for the representation of diaspora, Akhil Sharma's collection of stories focused on the experience of Indian male immigrants in the United States appears to be quite exceptional. Sharma explores diverse male experience, portraying masculinities rather than one masculinity, thus testifying to the complexity and constant fluidity of what it means to be a male, especially a culturally dislocated male.

In the presentation I aim to show that Sharma's collection of stories can be interpreted as an example of re-Orientalism. The author attempts to come to terms with an orientalized East, complying with perceived expectations of western readers, especially through his construction of the male protagonist, e.g., when he sexualizes him, suggests his effeminacy, or reveals his weaknesses. Interestingly, it is not exoticism or authenticity, which could make his fiction palatable for the Western audience, that is Sharma's interest. Considering Said's argument that how the West chooses to orientalize speaks more about the West than about the Orient, I ask a question about the significance of re-Orientalist tropes in Sharma's collection – what they may reveal about the West (the US) or about the Indian immigrants Sharma represents.

**Iwona Filipczak** works as an Assistant Professor in the Institute of Modern Languages, University of Zielona Góra, Poland. Her academic interests concentrate on the questions of identity and experience in South Asian American fiction, globalization, disability and illness. Her works have appeared in various edited volumes and in journals including *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*, *Atlantis. Journal of the Spanish Association for Anglo-American Studies*, *Brno Studies in English*, *Respectus Philologicus*, and *Roczniki Humanistyczne*.

GAJEK OLGA

## **Ecocritical Contemporary Horror: Cannibalism as Interventional Metaphor**

Contemporary horror film has been fascinated with cannibalistic narratives, that are aesthetically gory, aiming to realistically depict body as a biological, animalistic flesh. These narratives include *Raw* (Julia Ducornau, 2016), *The Farm* (Hans Stjernswärd, 2018), *Fresh* (Mimi Cave, 2022), *Bones and All* (Luca Guadagnino, 2022). In the twenty-first century horror film, humans eating humans can be read as a metaphor of animal consumption, seeing how much of a burning issue that is.

Adam Weitzenfeld and Melanie Joy, in their article “An Overview of Anthropocentrism, Humanism, and Speciesism in Critical Animal Theory,” highlight the human-animal dualism, which is dissected, literally and figuratively, in the cannibal horror genre. This on-screen phenomenon serves as a deconstructing tool – fictitious humans are seen exactly how animals are seen in reality: they are either farmed for meat and milk, or butchered, seasoned and cooked, or preyed upon and hunted. Through carnism (Joy), the horror genre explores the ultimate taboo of cannibalism, while providing a critical analysis of the culture of eating animals. The interspecies relation between humans and animals, can be seen both in regard to exploiting their bodies on screen, and in the nature of the killer and the killed – killers become animalistic; hence they are inhuman and evil.

This critique contributes to the discourse surrounding carnism, and remains relevant in discussion about ecocriticism, speciesism, and the human-animal binary in the horror genre.

Weitzenfeld, A., Joy, M. “An Overview of Anthropocentrism, Humanism, and Speciesism in Critical Animal Theory” in Joy, M. *Why We Love Dogs, Eat Pigs and Wear Cows: An Introduction to Carnism*, (Red Wheel Weiser: 2011).

Nocella, Anthony J., John Sorenson, Kim Socha, and Atsuko Matsuoka, eds. *Defining Critical Animal Studies. An Intersectional Social Justice Approach for Liberation* (PETER LANG: 2013), 5-6.

**Olga Gajek** is a BA and MA graduate of American Studies at the University of Warsaw. Her academic interests include: film, especially horror genre, gender studies, body studies, disability studies and animal studies.



GHOLAMI FATEMEH

## **Stop Feeding the Image: Ecophobic Manifestations in American Multimedia Franchise**

Simon C. Estok's theorizing of the word ecophobia as a means to challenge "the modus operandi of a profit-based system" has been gaining currency in ecocritical studies in response to the openness of the field and to problematize how representations of certain nonhuman others can and have indeed bred their irrational fear. In configuring and conceptualizing the ecophobia, Estok seeks to promote the urgency of the matter through promulgating a kind of activism whose scope might seem too vast, yet whose possibility will "eventually," to borrow his own term, become perceptible and subject to action. Not only is ecophobia represented in various media, but with the advent of multimedia franchises, it has been reproduced and dispersed across multiple representations. This tradition of reproduction as a form of entertainment has left us with a body of misdirected fears and ecophobic mentality. Therefore, this study, as part of a bigger project of critiquing the transmedia franchise as an institutionalized practice of ecophobia, takes the multimedia franchise of *Swamp Thing*, first appearing as a comic book in the 70s and its perpetual reproduction over the years to the most recent form as a TV series and investigates the manifold ways through which a natural place such as a swamp is demonized. Examining the shift in representations and critiquing the constant reproduction of such a rebuke of a nonhuman other is meant to bring ecophobia to the fore of literary and cinematic discussions so that, as misogyny is fought by feminism, ecophobic representations could be addressed and challenged by ecocritics as well. Apart from the theoretical analysis of ecophobic discourse, my presentation will encompass a detailed visual map of these representations as well with the purpose of providing a clear picture of what it means to reproduce an ecophobic notion.

**Fatemeh Gholami** received two masters' degrees in English Literature and Literary Studies, and is now a second-year Ph.D. student and her main field of work is spatiality theory and ecological readings of texts. She presented papers mainly on novels and films from econarratological perspectives and she is currently focused on transnational novels, memoirs, and films to investigate the ecological dynamics of texts within these narratives.

GIZA JAROSŁAW

## **Taylor Stevens' Vanessa Michael Munroe: American Lisbeth Salander?**

When one thinks of crime fiction, the first thought that comes to one's mind is associated with Scandinavia and its literary masterminds such as Jo Nesbø and Stieg Larsson, rather than with the American writers. However, an avid reader of crime fiction will surely find astonishing practitioners of this subgenre of literature in the American domain of literature as well, pointing to the undeniable fact that American texts are sure to be placed within a global totality and within a world literature as asserted by Wai Chee Dimock.

Undoubtedly, literary characters created by the Scandinavian crime fiction writers such as Lisbeth Salander (an alienated, resolute and independent computer hacker in Stieg Larsson's *Millennium* series) are more recognizable and acclaimed in the world literature. However, the heroine Vanessa Michael Munroe created by Taylor Stevens in her novels (*The Innocent*, *The Doll*, *The Catch*, *The Vessel*, *The Mask*) reveals the potential to be similarly recognizable like Larsson's Lisbeth.

The objective of the article is to show and analyse both similarities and differences between Lisbeth and Vanessa and consider them both as significant constituents of intertextual and expanding subgenre of crime fiction. It is also an attempt at answering the question whether the American crime fiction is ever likely to be as applauded as its Scandinavian co-partner in depiction of crime.

**Jarosław Giza, Ph.D.** (The University of Applied Sciences in Nowy Sącz, Poland) is a graduate of Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, Poland. He completed his doctoral dissertation entitled *The Archetype of Evil Genius – A Comparative Study: John Milton, Joseph Conrad, Fyodor Dostoevsky* that focuses upon the embodiments of the archetype of evil genius: Satan, Kurtz, and the brothers Karamazov. So far he has published thirteen articles addressing different shades of iniquity in literature. He is an associate professor at the University of Applied Sciences in Nowy Sącz. He is keen on heavy metal music, Scandinavian crime novels (especially Jo Nesbø and Stieg Larsson), and traditional karate.

GÓRNY ANTONI

## **Sweetback in Algiers: The Ghetto Chronotope and the Redefinition of “Race” in American Film**

The brief, explosive moment of the Black action film of the 1970s – commonly referred to as “blaxploitation” – is often viewed as, at best, a flash in the pan, and at worst, a shameless attempt to extort Black viewers. For the more progressively-inclined critics, films associated with blaxploitation were not political enough, potentially even conducive of a false consciousness. For those closer to the mainstream, they exemplified the validation of antisocial behavior, up to the point of directly promoting promiscuity, drug abuse, and violence. The debate about the impact of blaxploitation – and the potential aesthetic challenges to it – that took place after the 1970s rarely reckoned with the cultural labor performed by the films or the conditions in which they performed it. Rather than being a mere fad or a sales trend, blaxploitation offered an alternative view of Blackness, paving the way to a reimagining of “race.” It is useful to reconsider the aesthetic proposition of blaxploitation in the context of the decline of the Civil Rights and Black Power movements, the demise of the post-war “race problem” film, and the continuing degradation of the ghettos, as an inherently political, “Third-Worldist” intervention into the American imaginary of the 1970s – one whose impact on Blackness is still recognizable today.

**Antoni Górny** (Ph.D.) is a graduate of the American Studies Center and the Faculty of “Artes Liberales” at the University of Warsaw. His research interests focus on the history and practice of “race.” He also works as a translator (notable credits: Slavoj Žižek, *Violence*, 2010; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *The Post-Colonial Critic*, 2011, co-translator; Terry Eagleton, *The Idea of Culture*, 2012; and Tom Clancy, *Command Authority*, 2014, co-translator) and editor (most recently, of Polish editions of Raymond Chandler’s *Lady in the Lake* and *The Little Sister*, 2023). Other than that: music, biking, soccer, and comic books.

HETMAN JAROSŁAW

## **Living In a Future Which Has Already Become a Past. A Few Remarks on David Foster Wallace's *Infinite Jest***

Set in a not-too-distant future, David Foster Wallace's *Infinite Jest* is many things: an encyclopedic novel, a perverse *Bildungsroman*, a hysterical narrative, and, most pertinently to the scope of this conference, a work of speculative fiction. Reading Wallace's *opus magnum* nearly three decades after its publication gives us an uncanny sense of recognition – a disturbing realization that quite a few of the author's grim predictions about life in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century have come to fruition without us really noticing: the long-term effects of being exposed to digital media, an epidemic of mental health problems, and the aftermath of terrorist attacks on American soil, have all come to define our reality.

My paper aims to examine in more detail both the veracity and legitimacy of Wallace's predictions mainly through locating their rootedness in the U.S. culture of the late 1980s and early 1990s. I plan to approach this cultural context mainly through the author's own ventures into social criticism as manifested in his essays, and the scholarly commentary on his non-fiction that has amassed in the past two decades.

**Jarosław Hetman** is currently an Assistant Professor at Department of American Literature and Literary Translation, Nicolaus Copernicus University, Toruń. His fields of interest revolve around contemporary American literature and literary theory with a focus on the correspondences between the arts (mainly fiction and conceptual art). He has published extensively on the work of David Foster Wallace, most recently editing and co-authoring the first Polish monograph on Wallace for the University of Warsaw Press. He is also the author of *Ekphrastic Conceptualism in Postmodern British and American Novels: Don DeLillo, Paul Auster and Tom McCarthy* (2015).

İLERI EREN

## **Cyborg Astronaut: Disembodied White Masculinity and the Imagination of Outer Space in Science Fiction Digital Games**

Outer space travel and exploration are the backbones of US American science fiction since the early days of the genre. Since the 20th century and increasingly in more recent years, issues such as interplanetary travel, outer space colonization, human enhancement, and the use of, or conflicts with, artificial intelligence in the context of outer space frequently appear in popular science fiction and digital games. The cultural and societal significance of space exploration and the imagination of outer space has been the focus of many research efforts in recent years (Cockell, 2016; Dickens and Ormrod, 2016; Geppert, 2018; Messeri, 2016; Rieder, 2008, Westfahl, 2012). In the field of game studies, researchers have begun to acknowledge the posthumanist dimension of digital games (Boulter, 2015). However, in the realm of the critical analysis of science fiction, the cultural imagination of outer space in digital games remains underresearched and posthumanist theory has been largely absent in this context.

Through an in-depth critical trans-disciplinary analysis of digital games, my research project examines how disembodied masculinity operates and what role it plays in the construction of the “final frontier” idea in digital game narratives and mechanics. To accurately analyze the issues of disembodiment in the context of the depiction and experience of outer space travel in digital games, this study asks the following questions:

1. How can the novel representations of disembodied masculinities, which appear in digital games engaged with outer space exploration, be analyzed within a framework derived from posthumanist theory?
2. In what manner is the disembodiment of masculinity and race manifested in the cultural production of outer space in contemporary science fiction digital games?
3. How is the notion of the posthuman related to the cultural production of outer space in the US-American-dominated, transnational scene of contemporary science fiction digital games?

**Eren İleri** (born 1988, Istanbul) is an artist and researcher, currently interested in the question of disembodiment in the context of imagination of outer space in science fiction video games. He is a

DOC Fellow at the Austrian Academy of Sciences (ÖAW) and a Ph.D. researcher at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. His research project with the working title “Cyborg Astronaut: Disembodied White Masculinity and the Imagination of Outer Space in Science Fiction Digital Games” is supervised by Prof. Axel Stockburger and is co-supervised by Prof. Alexandra Ganser.

JACHEĆ TOMASZ

## **The Most Important NBA Game in the History of Polish Television: Yep... it's about Jordan again ;-)**

In June 1992, Polish Television (TVP) rebroadcast Game 1 of the 1992 NBA Finals. It was not the first NBA game ever to be broadcast by TVP, nevertheless, I claim it to be the most important one. I would like to present Game 1 of the 1992 NBA Finals in the context of what I refer to as “the myth of Michael Jordan.” I shall provide a historical background to the myth’s origin, and the history of NBA games on Polish television. I shall borrow from Zbigniew Mazur’s “Michael Jordan and Youth Culture in Postcommunist Poland”<sup>1</sup> a description of cultural conditioning of 1990s Poland, which offered a fertile soil for this American myth to flourish overseas. I will demonstrate the role Włodzimierz Szaranowicz and Ryszard Łabędź played in popularization of Jordan’s mythical stature among Polish basketball fans. Ultimately, my goal is to present Game 1 of the 1992 NBA Finals as a turning point in the process of globalization of the Jordan myth on the example of Poland.

**Tomasz Jacheć** – assistant at the University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn. Since 2008, I have been a member of PAAS. In my work, I focus on the landscape of American popular culture with sport in the center of my studies. My special interest lies in the cultural phenomenon called Michael Jordan, and the role this phenomenon and its narratives play in the culture of the USA. In December 2022, my dissertation, “‘Be Like Mike:’ Constructing the Myth of Michael Jordan in American Popular Culture of the Late 20th Century,” earned me a PhD title from UMCS in Lublin. I am also an avid fan of American stand-up comedy, as well as late night television comedy. I am a published author of academic articles on comedy, sport, and American popular culture.

---

<sup>1</sup> Carrington, Ben. Andrews, David L.. Jackson, Steven J.. Mazur, Zbigniew. “The Global Jordanscape.” *Michael Jordan, Inc.*, edited by David L. Andrews, State University of New York Press, 2001, pp. 177-216.

KAZMIERCZAK JANUSZ

## **Premonitions of a troubled future: *Love, death and robots* and deep time**

The adult animated anthology *Love, death and robots* (2019-2022) has been popular among critics and casual viewers alike. Streamed by the California-based Netflix to global audiences, it was produced by Tim Miller and other American filmmakers. So far, three seasons have been released, and the decision to produce season four was made public in the second half of 2022. Referred to by one critic as a “sci-fi extravaganza”, the anthology consists of brief episodes belonging to various genres, characterized by varied animation techniques and produced by studios from various countries, with a leading role played by the American Blur Studio. It could be dismissed as pure entertainment for adult audiences, if it were not for its continued popularity, generally high opinions of critics, exceptional quality of animation, and a number of awards it has won so far. The viewer of the anthology feels that, behind the explosions of colour and the vertigo of interstellar travel, the episodes address the fears and apprehensions of the early 21st century USA – and of the world, both inherently linked and participating in the same planetary processes. In this context, it seems that the concept of deep time, developed by Wai Chee Dimock and defined by her as “a set of longitudinal frames, at once projective and recessional, (...) and binding continents and millennia into many loops of relations” (*Through other continents: American literature across deep time*, 2006, loc. 71) is a promising perspective through which to look at this animated anthology. The paper concentrates on some of the frames as it attempts to systematize the premonitions of a troubled future that the anthology brings.

**Janusz Kaźmierczak** is a university professor at the Faculty of English, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland. His research interests include culture contact, cultural theory, and visual communication. Among his relevant publications there are: “Raymond Williams and cartoons: From Churchill’s cigar to cultural history”, *International Journal of Comic Art* 7, 2: 147-163 (2005), or “The community that never was: The European Defense Community and its image in Polish visual propaganda of the 1950s”, *Journal of Cold War Studies* 11, 4: 118-141 (2009).



KŁĘCZAJ-SIARA EWA

## **In search of Black creativity and joy – Black urban space in African American picture books**

Moving beyond conventional thinking that equates Black space with fearsome locality or dysfunction, contemporary African American children's authors define Black geographies as generative, joyful and secure. They offer alternative narratives of blackness by focusing on everyday activities as well as historical achievements of Black communities.

Drawing on Elijah Anderson's (2022) sociological concept of Black space where Black people find support and resources to express themselves, this presentation aims to analyze Bryan Collier's picture books *Uptown* (2004) and *City Shapes* (2016), as well as Joshunda Sander's *I Can Write the World* (2019) and *A Place of Our Own* (2023). It focuses on verbal and visual portrayals of real and imagined geographies, including private and communal spaces. It explores Black space as something to be searched for and created for a better future.

Dr **Ewa Kłęczaj-Siara** is Assistant Professor at Kazimierz Pulaski University of Technology and Humanities in Radom, where she teaches American Studies courses. Currently she is a Visiting Scholar at the Multinational Institute of American Studies, New York University (NYU). Her academic interests encompass the intersection of race and place in African American children's literature. She is the author of the book *Pokończyć czerń*. Her recent articles were published in *College Literature*, *Res Rhetorica*, and *International Research for Children's Literature*.

KOŁODZIEJCZYK DOROTA

**“America is ‘Maps’  
Maps are ghosts.”**

**Remapping America through extinct space and erased time in  
Natalie Diaz’ *Postcolonial Love Poem***

In her Pulitzer-awarded volume *Postcolonial Love Poem* (2012), Natalie Diaz develops an expansive vision of reclaiming America through indigenous sensitivity and knowledge. The “postcolonial” in the title is intriguing – it puzzles with an echo of academic discourse in a poetry collection that is dedicated to feeling and perceiving with and through nature. Nature in Diaz’s volume is a totality in which non/human exist through mutuality and reciprocity, where there is no other and no alien. The “postcolonial”, in the most basic sense, is the name given to the force of division underlying America’s modernity. Diaz shows how modernity can be seen from a different perspective, that of deprivation and loss experienced by first nations, and how living in the American modernity makes them acutely aware of their precarious existence on the brink of extinction that is, very importantly, cultural, linguistic, and “arithmetic” – reducing the indigenous peoples of America to a tiny number without much bidding power. In Diaz’s poems the past always dwells in the present, haunting it with what was once in existence but ceased to be given the possibility of living.

I will read Diaz comparatively through Amitav Ghosh’s essay *The Great Derangement. Climate change and the unthinkable* (2016), where he writes how time and space had to be remodeled to make modernity possible. He traces back the “derangement” of it to the colonial invasion of America into first peoples’ sense of space and time to make the geography of colonization and the temporality of modernity possible as authority and power.

**Dorota Kołodziejczyk**, Associate Professor at the Institute of English Studies, University of Wrocław, Poland. Chair of Olga Tokarczuk Ex-Centre. Academic Research Centre, director of the Postcolonial Studies Centre and board member of the Postdependence Studies Centre, a research network in Poland. She has published on postcolonialism, comparative literature and translation. Her recent publications include: *East Central Europe Between the Colonial and the Postcolonial in the Twentieth Century* (co-edited with Siegfried Huigen) <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-17487-2>, Palgrave 2023; guest-editing of the *European Review* (with Siegfried Huigen): *Cultural Landscapes*

*in Central and Eastern Europe After WW2 and the Collapse of Communism* (2022) and *New Nationalisms: Sources, Agendas, Languages* (2021); *Postcolonial Perspectives on Postcommunism in Central and Eastern Europe* (Routledge 2016, 2018), (co-edited with Cristina Sandru). Board member of the Palgrave Macmillan “New Comparisons in World Literature.”

KOWALCZYK ANDRZEJ S.

## **Beyond Transcendentalism: Sylvester Judd's *Margaret* (1845) and the Tradition of Utopia**

Sylvester Judd's major literary work, the novel *Margaret* (1845), called by its modern editor "the first book of the American Renaissance" (2009: vii), has been usually discussed, if at all, in the historical context of Transcendentalism. Apparently, this almost five-hundred-page-long Bildungsroman has not found its due place in the histories of New England literature, Judd's name being familiar only to specialists. While in his illuminating Introduction to the 2009 edition of the novel Gavin Jones accurately contextualizes *Margaret* within American intellectual, literary and socio-religious movements, his remarks on the novel's utopian character do not take into account the European tradition of utopia as a literary genre. This paper, therefore, proposes to reconsider Judd's seminal text and place it against the noticeably richer background of the literary utopia, initiated by Thomas More's model work. In addition to that, the article hopes to trace one of the threads which constitute "an extended tangle of relations," to use Wai Chee Dimock's (2006: 3) phrase for American literature, simultaneously accentuating Judd's indebtedness to a tradition whose intellectual roots can be traced even further back to antiquity (Claeys and Sargent, eds. 1999: 6).

Claeys, Gregory and Lyman Tower Sargent, eds. (1999). *The Utopia Reader*. New York and London: New York UP.

Dimock, Wai Chee (2006). *Through Other Continents: American Literature Across Deep Time*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton UP.

Judd, Sylvester (2009 [1845]). *Margaret*. Edited with an Introduction by Gavin Jones. Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press.

**Andrzej Sławomir Kowalczyk** is Associate Professor of British Literature at Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Lublin, Poland. His research interests include the supernatural in literature, the Gothic convention, cognitive poetics, as well as utopia/dystopia in literature and film. He is the author of two book-length studies: *The Voice of God, the Voice of Man: Religious Discourse in Late Medieval English Drama* (2007) and *Forms and Shadows: A Cognitive-Poetic Reading of Charles Williams's Fiction* (2017). He co-edited three books: *The Lives of Texts: Exploring the Metaphor* (2012), *Expanding the Gothic Canon: Studies in Literature, Film and New Media* (2014), and *Opalescent Worlds: Studies in Utopia. Festschrift in Honour of Artur Blaim* (2021). He is currently working on the first Polish translation and scholarly edition of the utopian novel *Margaret* (1845) by Sylvester Judd.

LENIARSKA ALEKSANDRA ZUZANNA

**Middle Class versus Mountain Lionesses:  
Neorealist temporalities and environmentalism  
in Lucy Ellmann's *Ducks, Newburyport*  
and Jonathan Franzen's *Freedom***

In 2015, Pew Research Center published a report under the telling title: “The American Middle Class Is Losing Ground.” This observation is confirmed by several other sociological and economic studies, but while it is clear that the American middle class is shrinking in the real world, it seems untroubled in the fiction of the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The return of realism in award-winning American novels, observed by a number of critics and academics (Rachel Greenwald Smith, Elaine Shonkwiler, James Wood) is characterized by the thematic investment in the middle class, the everyday, and the family saga, as if there was no crisis at hand. The temporalities of those novels focus on the habitual, unchanging personal and familial lives, ignoring the instant crisis, on the other – there is a common thread of non-human life as (also temporal) counterweight to human problems and human focalization.

In Lucy Ellmann's *Ducks, Newburyport* (2019), the stream of consciousness of a middle-class housewife, full of her economic, political, and personal angsts, is interrupted only by episodes of a narratively simpler story of a mountain lioness searching for her cubs. In Jonathan Franzen's *Freedom* (2010), one of the protagonists sees his only purpose in life as protecting the cerulean warbler, a bird whose habitat is destroyed by mining ventures which use the mountain-top removal technique. In this paper, I want to discover how those three temporalities intertwine: first, the immediate reality of middle-class crisis, second, the *longue-durée* of middle-class mythology and third, the non-human temporality violently interrupted by Anthropocene. How do they inform each other, and what contexts do they feed? Finally, what are the ideological consequences of juxtaposing these temporalities and how do they shape the critiques of Anthropocene and capitalism that the authors offer?

**Aleksandra Zuzanna Leniarska** is a Ph.D candidate at University of Warsaw, Doctoral School of Humanities in the discipline of literature, and a Fulbright grantee visiting Stanford University (2021-22). She specializes in U.S. literature and culture, and her academic interests include literary realism,

contemporary fiction, theory of the novel. Her research combines close and distant reading – she employs computational text analysis methods and has an interest in the sociology of literature. She completed her MA studies in American Studies Center at University of Warsaw with recognition of Polish Association for American Studies for one of the best theses in American Studies in 2016. She has background in English, French, and Spanish language and culture studies.

LIPSKI JAKUB

## ***The Female American (1767): A failed Amazon and the Founding Myth***

The proposed paper argues that America's founding myth that lies at the core of *The Female American* entails a failure of the Amazonian myth that the novel establishes at its outset. Unca Eliza, the biracial heroine of "tawny complexion", "mixed habit", wearing an "Indian" bow and arrow, challenges the feminine ideal of domesticity at the beginning of the castaway narrative, when she whets the readers' appetites by promising to write about what is typically experienced by men. She is marooned on an island and manages to survive, but her Amazonian potential is metaphorically sacrificed when she undertakes missionary work. This paper will show how the Crusoesque Christianisation of the island, a colonial allegory, makes the heroine incorporate the patriarchal symbolic order and abandon her Amazonian identity. Unca's physical hybridity eventually remains little more than a textualised emblem of a peaceful interracial and international encounter, part of an imperial fantasy into which the narrative transforms.

**Jakub Lipski** is University Professor and head of the Department of Anglophone Literatures at the Faculty of Literary Studies, Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz. He is the author of *In Quest of the Self: Masquerade and Travel in the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (2014), *Painting the Novel: Pictorial Discourse in Eighteenth-Century English Fiction* (2018), and *Re-Reading the Eighteenth-Century Novel: Studies in Reception* (2021) as well as a number of articles and book chapters on eighteenth-century English literature. His new book (forthcoming in early 2024) concentrates on the representations of the body in the eighteenth-century castaway narrative.

ŁASZKIEWICZ WERONIKA

## **The Advent of Amborgs: Transgressing the Boundaries between Species in Ursula K. Le Guin's *Buffalo Gals and Other Animal Presences***

*Buffalo Gals and Other Animal Presences* (1987), a collection of poems and short stories which Ursula K. Le Guin published during the 1970s and 80s, is one of her lesser-known works. Yet while her contribution to the development of Anglo-American science fiction (*The Hanish Cycle*) and fantasy (*The Earthsea* series) cannot be overestimated, it is in *Buffalo Gals* that Le Guin addresses topics which are particularly relevant for postmodern readers entangled in the discussion of the Anthropocene and humanity's destructive impact on the planet's ecosystems. Filled with non-human protagonists and inanimate subjects, whom Western culture commonly perceives as devoid of sentience and agency, the collection reimagines and blurs the boundaries between species in order to invite the reader to reevaluate both their own place in the cosmic order of life and their attitude toward the non-human Other. The aim of this paper is to examine the interspecies relations depicted in *Buffalo Gals* through the critical lens offered by Joan Gordon's concept of the amborg. The amborg, a liminal creature balancing between culture and nature, challenges Western perception of humanity's dominion over other forms of life, and instead encourages people to acknowledge and cherish the animal presence around and within them as an alternative and complementary mode of existence. Adopted as an interpretative model, the amborg allows to read Le Guin's *Buffalo Gals* (and other works of speculative fiction) as a thought-provoking response to current environmental concerns.

**Weronika Łaszkiewicz**, PhD, is an assistant professor at the University of Białystok (Poland). She has written a number of articles on Anglo-American speculative fiction and is the author of *Fantasy Literature and Christianity* (2018) and *Exploring Fantasy Literature: Selected Topics* (2019) as well as the co-editor of *Narrating the Future: Images of the Anthropocene in Speculative Fiction* (2021). She is currently working on a book examining the presence of Native characters and cultures in contemporary speculative fiction.



MACEDULSKA KATARZYNA

## **Dreaming America in Abdi Nor Iftin's Memoir *Call Me American* (2018)**

Commencing with Wai Chee Dimock's (2006: 3) proposition that

what we call 'American' literature is quite often a shorthand, a simplified name for a much more complex tangle of relations. Rather than being a discrete entity, it is better seen as a crisscrossing set of pathways, open-ended and ever multiplying, weaving in and out of other geographies, other languages, and cultures,

I would like to analyze the idiosyncratic process of identity construction in the memoir by the Somali American writer Abdi Nor Iftin *Call Me American*. Iftin is a survivor of the still ongoing Somali Civil War that started in the 1980s. His memoir I read as a text of roots and routes – from his birth (ca.1985), to the resettlements within Africa, to the migration to and his current life in the USA. The title of his work recalls one of the most recognizable opening lines in American literature – “*Call Me Ishmael*”; while the narrative seems to reverberate with the poem “I, Too” (“*I, too sing America / I, too, am America*”). And it is in terms of American culture, literature, and language that Iftin has always been so passionate about, that he frames his unbelievable quest for freedom (winning the green card verges on the miraculous; yet is one of many incredible milestones on his way).

America Iftin learns about through the movies that mesmerize him; his fascination with everything American becomes relentless. What took root in him as a child grows into what many may consider a naïve and romanticized vision of the US. However, Iftin's idea(l)s, his indefatigable belief and resilience are what ultimately keep him alive. I consider his approach and attitude as a strategy of survival that is not analytic, but rather develops in synch with his personality and an acute sense of hope. American Dream materializes for him, even though it is not exactly what he expected: the struggle in the new country is real. Yet, his narrative is a testimony to the potential of the American Dream as seen from the outside. It is also informed by the general questions regarding how ideas and concepts travel great distances, how cultural values are translated and appropriated, and how popular culture contributes to their dissemination. Finally, it asks what America is/appears to be and what it means to be American today. As Rebecca Solnit writes: “the power comes from the shadows and the margins [...] our hope is in the dark around the edges, not the limelight of center

stage.” And it is these not quite lit spaces I would like to discuss in my paper in reference to Iftin’s memoir.

Dimock, Wai Chee. 2006. *Through Other Continents: American Literature Across Deep Time*. Princeton UP.

Hughes, Langston. 2022. *The Weary Blues*. Martino Fine Books.

Melville, Herman. 2013. *Moby Dick*. Penguin.

Solnit, Rebecca. 2016. *Hope in the Dark. Untold Histories, Wild Possibilities*. London: Canongate.

**Katarzyna Macedulska**, PhD, is author of *Remembering Oneself, Charting the Other – Memory as Intertextuality and Self-Reflexivity in the Works of Paul Auster* (Trier: WVT, 2012), editor of *Cultural Dynamics of Play* (Oxford: Inter-Disciplinary Press/Brill, 2013), co-editor of *Storying Humanity: Narratives of Culture and Society* (with Richard Wirth and Dario Serrati, Oxford: Inter-Disciplinary Press/Brill, 2015). She has co-authored (with Agnieszka Rzepa and Dagmara Drewniak) the monograph *The self and the world. Aspects of the aesthetics and politics of contemporary North American literary memoir by women* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, 2018). Currently, her research is centered on contemporary USA literature with the focus on memory, trauma, narrative, and autobiography.

MALINOWSKA ALEKSANDRA JULIA

## **The Problem with Valerie Solanas: Why do Feminists Keep Writing About Her?**

A year after Valerie Solanas self-published her iconic *SCUM Manifesto*, she pulled the trigger on Andy Warhol at his Factory in New York City igniting a scandal that will grab the attention of NOW (National Organization for Women) activists causing a rupture between the radical and liberal factions of the women's movement at the time (Graff 2007, Owen 2022), a split that still holds relevance today. Solanas continues to be a divisive figure among feminist academics; celebrated by some for her courage to take revenge on men, and rejected by others fearful of her radicalism and use of violence. Considering the continuous interest that feminist writers have in Solanas, this paper identifies the *Problem with Solanas* i.e. it pinpoints the reasons behind the high volume of scholarship on the author and her radical manifesto, and explores how this anti-feminist writer found herself so deeply entangled with feminist discourse. I propose that the Problem with Solanas is three-fold. Because of the many misconstructions and question marks surrounding Solanas' biography (1) she has become an iconic, sticky figure (2) of continued feminist inquiry, who embodies the central anxieties of the women's movement (3). First, I conduct a literature review exposing the biographical inconsistencies, interpretative repetitions and gaps in understanding of Solanas' *SCUM Manifesto* thus, illustrating why scholarship on Solanas seems not exhaustive, in turn motivating more research. Secondly, incorporating autoethnography, I discuss the paths many feminist authors take to Solanas and provide examples of women who have dedicated their lives' work to the *SCUM* author. Finally, I explore feminism's relationship to Solanas and conclude that unless the movement deals with *SCUM Manifesto* in a serious manner, as opposed to the popular, dismissive interpretation as satire, the central question of women's movement will remain unanswered; the question being whether feminist use of violence or respectability is the more effective strategy for social transformation.

**Aleksandra Julia Malinowska** is currently concluding her MA, in line to graduate in July, before she continues her studies at the University of Warsaw Doctoral School of Humanities, where she will be completing her dissertation under dr hab. Karolina Krasuska as a part of the Preludium BIS grant funded by the National Science Center.

MANDEL SUSANNAH

## **The U.S. and the “Rest of the West”: Is the Modern U.S. a Policy Outlier Compared to the Rest of the Western World?**

I am intrigued by the ways this conference’s themes intersect with my current work. I consider myself a “critical Americanist”: born and educated in the U.S., I spent the better part of twenty years living and teaching outside it. Returning to academic research, I find I now have a split “insider/ outsider” viewpoint on my native country.

Years spent working in Europe, and alongside European and international Anglophone colleagues in other global regions, have left me aware that in many ways, the ideolog(ies), value system(s), and underlying assumptions of American life are distinct outliers in the context of “the modern West,” both in politics and in the way political decisions trickle down to everyday life. [1]

However, this situation, self-evident thought it may seem, is surprisingly difficult to articulate or discuss within the American context. Remarkably, few studies or references are available to illustrate the contrasts, and a great many Americans have little—or even have incorrect—knowledge of conditions elsewhere. Statements of fact may be met with frank disbelief: an issue that, at times, also occurs when attempting to discuss American conditions with Europeans. My current project aims to facilitate these discussions by constructing a factual comparison of U.S. as against broader “Western” world approaches to several key questions of internal policy, as understood through established law and/or further informed by consideration of political speech, election outcomes, and legal decisions. (Comparison is the first step; theorizing will follow.) The three questions I begin with—labor-protection law; the right to housing assistance; and the legality of capital punishment—should, I think, provide both focus and ample contrastive illustration.

Within this conference’s conceptual framework, I would present my project as removing the U.S. from its exceptionalist frame to consider its “values”—particularly those related to political economy, human rights, and other concepts framed in the West in the early modern period and Enlightenment—in the context of the U.S.’s fellow rich, “Western,” “democratic” countries. The timeframe, then, involves the evolution of “modern Europe,” which may be dated to start anywhere from about c. 1250 to c. 1450 [2]; the geography is the U.S. in the context of “the rest of the West.”

**Notes:**

[1] By “the modern West,” I refer primarily to the countries of Western and Central Europe—from which, of course, most “white” Americans claim ethnic, as well as cultural and philosophical/religious, descent [1b]—as well as fellow former English colonies that, like the U.S., are today wealthy democracies dominated by colonizer descendants (i.e. Canada, New Zealand, Australia).

Given the shared roots and parallel cultural and economic development histories, I think these are the most appropriate current comparators for the U.S. in terms of metrics like populace well-being, equality of resource access, and—for however one defines the term—“freedom.”

(Oddly, the U.S. itself tends to avoid such comparisons, preferring instead to contrast itself with, e.g., China, Russia or Iran.)

[1b] As of 2010, the countries considered by the most white-, non-Hispanic-identifying Americans to be their place(s) of ancestry were Germany, Ireland, England, Italy, and Poland, followed by France, Scotland, Norway, the Netherlands, and Sweden. Collectively, this group comprises 61% of Americans.

Cf.: APM Research Lab, *Roots Beyond Race*, 2019. [apmresearchlab.org/rootsbeyondrace](http://apmresearchlab.org/rootsbeyondrace)

Cf. also: U.S. Census Bureau. <https://www.census.gov/topics/population/ancestry/data/tables.html>

[2] I am thinking of the (debated) general-consensus starting point of the “early modern” period.

Raised in California and the northeast U.S., **Susannah Mandel** holds BA and MS degrees in English literature and media studies from Harvard University and MIT. She taught English language and American culture for 15+ years in France, Japan, and the Middle East. Returning to academic research, She turns an insider/outsider perspective on American studies, investigating what discourse analysis of contemporary and historical texts reveals about the underpinnings of U.S. moral, historical and epistemological beliefs. Her fiction and creative nonfiction appear in various professional and university journals. In 2023, she has presented papers to the Popular/ American Culture Association; the American Literature Association; and the annual English conference of the University of Bucharest (online). In November I will present on U.S. epistemologies of race and racism at the University of Naples “L’Orientale.”

MĄCZKO MALGORZATA

## **A Lifetime of Responsibility: Alternative Temporality and Black Girlhood in American Cinema**

As American cinema becomes more diverse, it opens up to minority narratives. In recent years, independent filmmakers have turned their attention to Black girls, whose experiences had often been overlooked in the past. In doing so, they mirror a similar shift in theoretical reflection on girlhood, which has become more intersectional and inclusive. More research is needed to address how girls of color navigate the racist and sexist systems of power, and how their lived experiences are represented in the media.

This paper will address how Black girlhood is depicted in speculative fiction film. I will analyze three films – *Beasts of the Southern Wild* (dir. Benh Zeitlin, 2012), *Brown Girl Begins* (dir. Sharon Lewis, 2018), and *A Wrinkle in Time* (dir. Ava du Vernay, 2018) – which feature varied portrayals of Black girls within futuristic or fantasy settings. I will focus on the issue of agency and responsibility, as all three protagonists have to care for their relatives and communities despite their young age. These narratives depict alternative temporalities, within which Black girls' identities are shaped by the burden of their responsibility to others, and by social forces not dissimilar to those that exist in the real world. The paper will examine if different futures are possible – within the analyzed films, and in similar works of fiction. By addressing this issue, the paper will highlight the complex dynamics of agency, responsibility, identity, and representation of Black girlhood in American cinema.

**Malgorzata Mączko** is a PhD candidate at the Jagiellonian University Doctoral School in the Humanities in the Studies on Arts program. She is interested in minority representation in film, and her doctoral research focuses on depictions of racism and racial rhetoric in contemporary American cinema. She graduated from Film and New Media Studies at the JU and works as a film educator.

MIERNIK MIROSLAW ALEKSANDER

## **Puritans and Snobs: Conflict Between the Urban and the Provincial in the works of Elizabeth Strout**

Most of Elizabeth Strout's novels showcase the conflict between small towns in New England, particularly Maine, and larger cities, particularly New York, highlighting a conflict that often remains downplayed in the United States. In her fiction, this conflict is a crucial source of tension both between the key characters in her works, particularly in terms of people who have left these smaller communities, but also within those who are transients trying to find their place. This tension is one of the factors determining the deterioration of Tyler Caskey's marriage in *Abide with Me*, a metaphor for familial atomization in *Olive Kitteridge*, escapism from trauma in *The Burgess Boys*, and the symbol of the increased atomization of American society in the novel's concerning Lucy Barton. My presentation will focus on the prejudices of denizens of both types of areas, such as the Puritan streak that leads members of small communities to view large cities with suspicion, even enmity, but also the perception of small towns as backward, intolerant and uncultured by residents of large cities. I will also consider the role that the differences in cultural and economic capital play in the rift between the two, along with the way the American Dream becomes increasingly removed from the reality of the deindustrialized townships.

**Miroslaw Aleksander Miernik** specializes in American Studies, the contemporary American novel, particularly in terms of the interrelation of the economic and consumer issues on culture and literature. His most recent book is *Rethinking Fiction after the 2007/8 Financial Crisis: Consumption, Economics and the American Dream* (Routledge, 2021; paperback release 2023). He also is the author of *Rolfe, Rose, Corvo, Crabbe: The Literary Images of Frederick Rolfe* (Peter Lang 2015), and numerous articles on suppression women from the literary canon, reactions to the Iraqi War in popular music and the impact of the 2007/9 financial crisis on US culture.

MYK MALGORZATA

## **Selfhood at War: Risking Duration of Ecstatic Variation (E. Tracy Grinnell's *Helen, A Fugue*)**

“All Sappho’s music is lost” – wrote the Canadian poet Anne Carson in the introduction to her famous *If Not, Winter: Fragments of Sappho*. Mindful of Carson’s notes of loss, longing and lament, this paper examines the conceptual stakes of the fugue form refigured by the American poet E. Tracy Grinnell in her 2008 sequence *Helen, A Fugue*. In the poetic excavation of traces of the elusive Helen of Troy figure, Grinnell, who does not have any formal musical training, explores the fugue as a spatial, temporal, and sonic serial form of radical duration. The poet generates alternative temporalities through durational variations, trance-like compositional intensities as well as by echoing historically and socially stifled voices overheard within the risky terrain of the most mercurial of all musical forms. Considering Grinnell’s long-standing preoccupation with poetic enactments of soundscapes and her interest in homophonic translation, I explore her abstract refiguration of the fugue as poetic hearing *in extremis* driven by a desire for *ekstasis* (standing outside oneself) and self-transcendence. In my analysis, I also include the work of poets who experimented with or reflected on the fugue form and its complexity (Whalen, Wirpsza, Czachorowski). My other frames of reference will be Michael Davidson’s perspective on “missing music” formulated in his recent study *Distressing Language: Disability and the Poetics of Error* (2022) and the French philosopher and psychoanalyst Anne Dufourmantelle’s remarks on variation found in her 2011 book *In Praise of Risk*.

**Malgorzata Myk**, Ph.D.; D. Litt. is an Assistant Professor in the Department of North American Literature and Culture at the University of Lodz. Author of the monograph *Upping the Ante of the Real: Speculative Poetics of Leslie Scalapino* (2019). Co-editor of *Theory That Matters: What Practice After Theory* (2013) and the *Polish Journal for American Studies* Special Issue on technical innovation in North American Poetry (2017). The Kosciuszko Foundation Fellowship recipient in the academic year 2017/18 (UCSD). Myk studied at the Department of English, University of Maine, where she worked for the National Poetry Foundation as an Editorial Assistant of the journal *Paideuma: Studies in American and British Modernism*. She currently serves as the Co-Editor-in-Chief of *Text Matters: A Journal of Literature, Theory and Culture*, published by Lodz University.



NOWORYTA MARCELINA

## **Necessity of translation: The translation turn and essays of the fourth-wave American feminism on the example of *The Mother of All Questions* by Rebecca Solnit**

The aim of my paper is to present the function and importance of cross-cultural translation in the dissemination of the core principles of the fourth-wave of feminism from the United States to other countries. I examine the key tenets of this movement and their rendition in one of the fourth-wave's most pivotal texts: *The Mother of All Questions* by Rebecca Solnit. Following the approach of the translational turn, I discuss the potential impact that the translated essay has had on many nations and provide grounds for why further translational work on feminist essays in particular is so vital for social and cultural progress. According to Kira Cochrane, the beginning of the fourth-wave of feminism in the United States dates back to around 2013 when protests and actions related to feminism began to grow louder and move beyond the medium of the internet to the streets. Among many other issues, the movement targets the matters of reclaiming narratives of marginalised social groups, the phenomenon of mansplaining, the objectification and sexualisation of women's bodies and the exposure of biases against women in social, economic and political life. Some define the fourth-wave as a response to the somewhat idle nature of the third wave and post-feminism, which claimed that equality among people have already been reached. My speech demonstrates how the action of translating texts central to the fourth-wave of feminism within the premises of the translational turn have contributed to this movement being the antithesis of this idleness.

**Marcelina Noworyta** is a PhD candidate at the Institute of English Studies in the Department of the History of American Literature and Culture in the Doctoral School of Humanities at Jagiellonian University. Her doctoral dissertation explores the essayist works of fourth-wave feminism in the United States, in which she conducts a linguistic and genre analysis of the most recent trajectories in American fourth-wave feminist essayism, characterises its literary strategies and interprets the issues raised by the authors of this movement in the United States. She is also a graduate of Faculty of Polish Studies in Teaching Polish as a Foreign and Second Language.

OLSZA MALGORZATA

## **Looking at the overlooked: The vision of “slow violence” in Chris Hedges and Joe Sacco’s *Days of Destruction, Days of Revolt***

In this paper, I aim to read Chris Hedges and Joe Sacco’s graphic novel *Days of Destruction, Days of Revolt* (2012) through the lens of “slow violence”, a term coined by Rob Nixon in his 2011 book *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*, and examine how different forms of violence, be it economic and/or environmental affect the often forgotten and overlooked areas of the contemporary United States. Hailed by the press as “without question, the most profoundly disquieting (and downright shocking) portrait of modern America in recent years,” *Days of Destruction, Days of Revolt* examines in and through the medium of comics the so-called “sacrifice zones,” that is areas which have been controlled, exploited, and consequently ruined by corporate greed. These include towns in South Dakota, New Jersey, West Virginia, and Florida. My engagement with the notion of time and temporality in this critical reading is threefold. For one, I discuss how the present degradation of the “sacrifice zones” is not only the result of 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>-century corporate governance but runs deeper, to the very beginnings of colonial America (with Hedges stating that “corporate capitalism will, quite literally, kill us, as it has killed Native Americans, African Americans,” p. xiii). Secondly, as mentioned above, considering this extended timescale, I discuss these developments in the context of Nixon’s “slow violence,” that is violence that appears to be “invisible” because of its temporal scope. Lastly, I shall also examine how the visual language of comics (a combination of panels and gutters) represents those complex temporalities.

Dr. **Malgorzata Olsza** (she/ her) is Assistant Professor at the Department of American Literature at AMU. Her Ph.D. thesis was devoted to the poetics of the contemporary American graphic novel (2017). She also holds an M.A. in Art History. She has published on different aspects of American comics in *Polish Journal for American Studies*, *ImageText: Interdisciplinary Comics Studies*, and *Image [&] Narrative*. She has also contributed chapters to the edited collections *Comic Art and Feminism in the Baltic Sea Region* (Routledge, 2021), *Drawing the Past, Volume 2: Comics and the Historical Imagination in the World* (UP of Mississippi, 2022), and *Seeing Comics through Art History: Alternative Approaches to the Form* (Palgrave Macmillan 2022).

PARADOWSKI MICHAŁ

## **Polis and Beyond: Urban Space in Charles Olson's *The Maximus Poems***

This paper examines the ways in which Charles Olson, a post-war American poet, approaches and uses the space(s) of his hometown of Gloucester, Massachusetts, transforming it into a part factual part imaginary field where both local and global geographies and histories coexist. Much has been written on Olson's *The Maximus Poems* and the impressive scope of its cultural references, especially in the 1970s, but a recent rebirth of interest in the poetry and theories of Olson calls for a rereading of his magnum opus. Aware of the importance of Olson to the now-significant ecopoetics, I set this research's primary goal to explore the poet's relation to the man-made space rather than nature, yet to no surprise Olson's *polis* cannot exist apart from its environment. The paper builds on the existing discussion on the multi-volume poem, close reading, and original attempts to see Olson's project in a new light by studying it against theories that have (Whitehead) or have not yet been (Virilio) employed in studies of Olson.

**Michał Paradowski** is a graduate student of English Studies and Artes Liberales at the University of Warsaw, currently in the process of completing two MA theses. His dissertation is devoted to investigating how three American poets – Williams, Olson, and Oppen, have approached and incorporated space (of very concrete locations) in their major poetic projects: *Paterson*, *The Maximus Poems*, and *Of Being Numerous*, respectively. Apart from modern American poetry, his academic and non-academic interests include arthouse cinema, philosophy, and traveling alone.

PAWLAK BARBARA

## **Singularity on the Horizon: Merging of Technology and Humanity in Don DeLillo's Novels**

In 1983, Vernor Vinge popularized the term of “technological singularity,” which established a hypothetical point in the history of civilization where humanity will create artificial intelligence far more capable than any human. This would cause a tremendous jump in the progress of technology, as the newly created superintelligence would advance and improve itself far beyond any comprehension. The technological singularity would be a creation of a new world; where the existence of regular humans would be put under question. This new technologically advanced world would either not be a place for humans, or would be a place for a new type of being: one that is interconnected with the ever-accelerating technological advancement. One of the well-regarded American writers, Don DeLillo, brings up issues of technology seeping into every part of daily life. His writing suggests the arrival of technological singularity and technology's increasing influence on the nature of human life. The characters in Don DeLillo's stories are intricately connected to technology, sometimes even becoming a part of the data flow, or being left empty and thoughtless when said technology is ripped away from them. It presents an ominous vision where the modern world is already merged with technology to such an extent, that it is difficult to point at a boundary between it and human intelligence. While the most extreme version of technological singularity is still far, Don DeLillo presents that we are coming dangerously close to it, and that we are not prepared to face the consequences.

**Barbara Pawlak** is a PhD student in the Doctoral School of Humanities of University of Łódź. She published articles entitled “The Return of the Sublime and the Transcendental in Don DeLillo's *Zero K*” in *Explorations: A Journal of Language and Literature* in 2021 and “Approaching the sublime in *Chernobyl* (2019)” in *Currents: A Journal of Young English Philology Thought and Review* in 2020. Her current research focuses on searching for the technological sublime in Don DeLillo's novels and the use of theory of the sublime in modern texts.

PERKOWSKA-GAWLIK ELŻBIETA

## **Narratives Stuck in the Present: Nonstandard Space and Time in *The Decameron Project: 29 New Stories from the Pandemic* (2020)**

After just a few months from the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, the editors of *The New York Times Magazine* published a collection of twenty-nine short stories, all of which, although very much different in style, refer to the uncanny time of early spring 2020. The volume *The Decameron Project* points to the disturbing similarity between Boccaccio's young story tellers attempting to enjoy the imaginary world of their own narratives during the Great Plague of 1346-1351 and the contemporary authors capturing and preserving for subsequent generations the awe and fear related to humanity's vulnerability to the lethal power of the coronavirus.

Prompted by Wai Chee Dimock's idea that "[l]iterary culture [...] allows nonstandard space and time" (2006: 123), this paper aims to analyze the ways in which the first person and the second person narratives of selected stories from *The Decameron Project* convey the uncertainty of the unwanted present, i.e. the time of the pandemic. The paper also hopes to explain why, when faced with mass quarantine which put a halt to social interactions, hardly any contributor to the project conjures a comforting vision of the future or seeks to find some consolation in the past.

**Elżbieta Perkowska-Gawlik** is Assistant Professor at the Department of English and American Studies of Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, Poland. She received her doctorate from MCSU Lublin, with a PhD thesis on the academic mystery novel. She specializes in narratology, academic fiction and the classical detective novel. She has published articles and book chapters on British and American academic mystery fiction and on utopia in crime fiction, fairy tales and new media. She is the author of the monograph *The Contemporary Academic Mystery Novel: A Study in Genre* (Peter Lang, 2021).

PIECHUCKA ALICJA

## **Pandemic as Pretext: The Implications of Global Cataclysms in Don DeLillo's *The Silence* and Slavoj Žižek's Writings on COVID-1**

The paper focuses on Don DeLillo's latest novel, *The Silence*, which is analyzed and interpreted in light of Slavoj Žižek's writings collected in *Pandemic!: COVID-19 Shakes the World*. While both works were published in 2020, only the latter deals explicitly with the coronavirus pandemic. In *The Silence*, DeLillo does not mention the pandemic at all; he does, however, refer to it directly in a short essay which was added to the novel's later editions. This does not change the fact that the atypical situation in which DeLillo's characters find themselves, though caused by factors of a technical rather than sanitary nature, bears numerous resemblances to what people all over the globe experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic. The aim of the paper is to read *The Silence* through the lens of Žižek's reflections and thereby to examine the political, sociocultural, technological and human implications of global cataclysms. My argument is that for both the American novelist and the Slovenian philosopher, worldwide disasters such as the blackout depicted in *The Silence* or the 2020 pandemic are merely a pretext for delving into the condition of the modern world, with particular emphasis on how twenty-first century reality is affected by globalization, science, technology, war and environmental degradation. DeLillo's novel is more of a meditation while Žižek's collection of essays may be seen as a call to action. Nevertheless, both are statements on a humanity in crisis, disoriented, fragile and helpless, living in times which are, paradoxically, uncertain and even paranoia-inducing despite the unprecedented scale of scientific and technological progress.

**Alicja Piechucka** is Associate Professor of American literature in the Department of North American Literature and Culture at the University of Lodz. She is an Americanist, English philologist, literary scholar, literary and film critic. In 2006, she received her Ph.D. from the University of Lodz, based on a doctoral dissertation devoted to T.S. Eliot's poetry. In 2020, she obtained her habilitation in literary studies, based mostly on works dealing with Hart Crane's oeuvre. Her academic interests include American literature, French literature, modernist poetry, modernist and contemporary prose, and comparative literature. She has authored over 100 publications, including two monographs.

PŁOMIŃSKI PIOTR

## **Contingent realities and the vibrancy of matter in Philip K. Dick's *The Man in the High Castle***

The aim of this paper is to present a portion of the findings of my doctoral dissertation on Philip K. Dick's novels' relationship to posthumanist philosophy. In the paper, I offer a reading of *The Man in the High Castle*, investigating the novel's alternative history setting and the role of inanimate objects and the broader nature-cultural material assemblages to which they belong in the process of uncovering, for the human subjects, the contingent nature of reality. In particular, I analyze the climactic scene where the character of Mr. Tagomi, a high-ranking official of Imperial Japan, seemingly transports to an alternative timeline while contemplating a piece of jewelry made by a Jewish craftsman. Using the frameworks of Jane Bennett's philosophy of vital materialism and Francesca Ferrando's thought experiment of the posthuman multiverse, I argue that within the narrative of the novel, inanimate objects and works of art are portrayed as active agents capable of influencing a change in the perception of reality for individual subjects. This uncovers the complex contingencies guiding the organization of their reality, refuting the essentialist ideology of fascism dominant in the novel's setting. Ultimately, I argue that Dick's novel, in concurrence with the new-materialist philosophies, challenges dominant hierarchies of essential humanism and highlights the transformative power of encounters between humans and nonhuman actants.

**Piotr Płomiński** is a PhD candidate in American Studies at the University of Łódź. His doctoral research focuses on the postmodern and posthuman aspects in Philip K. Dick's prose. His research interests include posthumanism and the narratives of contemporary American science-fiction.

PODGAJNA PATRYCJA

## **Human/Posthuman Storytelling Across Time: *Speak* (2015) by Louisa Hall**

“We’re linked to histories we can’t ever know,  
forgotten stories that form our most intimate substance.”  
(*Speak* 98)

Although largely future-oriented, posthumanism with its projections of possible posthuman modes of being and critical deconstruction of humanist and anthropocentric values is taking an increasingly geological turn by investigating the future through the prism of planet’s historical and geographical entanglements. “The geologization of posthumanist thinking” (Herbrechter 36) clearly echoes contemporary theoretical tendencies of “placing the human within a deep-time geopolitical and geo-ecological framework in the context of Anthropocene” (Herbrechter 30) so as to redefine a human-centric approach and to reconceptualize interrelations between human and non-human entities. The importance of acknowledging planetary experience and “deep time” perspective resonates in the concept of history proposed by Dipesh Chakrabarty in his *The Climate History in a Planetary Age* (2021) or literary theory of Wai Chee Dimock who in his book *Through Other Continents. American Literature Across Deep Time* (2006) urges to adopt a broad historical and geographical perspective in analysing American literature.

The notion of “deep time” histories is interestingly addressed in Louisa Hall’s novel *Speak* (2015) in which five different voices—17<sup>th</sup> century character Mary Bradford, the British cryptologist Alan Turing, an AI pioneer named Karl Dettman, a teenage girl Gaby White and a disgraced scientist Stephen R. Chinn—highlight how the development of artificial intelligence has fundamentally altered human communication and interconnectedness across time. Referring to the theoretical framework of geological posthumanism, the aim of this paper is to analyze how the deployment of deep time perspective serves to highlight the changing nature and function of language and storytelling across distant temporal planes and among both human and posthuman agents.

Chakrabarty, Dipesh. *The Climate History in a Planetary Age*. University of Chicago Press, 2021.

Dimock, Wai Chee. *Through Other Continents. American Literature Across Deep Time*. Princeton University Press, 2006.



Hall, Louisa. *Speak*. Orbit, 2015.

Herbrechter, Stefan. "Posthumanism and Deep Time." in *The Palgrave Handbook of Critical Posthumanism*, ed. Stefan Herbrechter et al., Springer, 2022.

**Patrycja Podgajna** is Assistant Professor of English Literature at Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Lublin. Her main research interests include postmodernist fiction, utopia/dystopia in literature and film, as well as the posthuman in contemporary literature and film. She has published on British contemporary fiction and utopian/dystopian narratives. She is the author of *Intertextual Transactions in Contemporary British Fiction* (2021).

REICHARDT ULFRIED

## Multiple Times and ‘Mismatched Temporalities’

Taking my starting point from Dipesh Chakrabarty’s *The Climate of Planetary History*, I will discuss the paradoxical relationship between geological earth time and human or historical time. Chakrabarty’s statement that we are dealing with mismatched temporalities will be probed on several levels. I will look at the tension between the billions of years long history of planet earth and humans’ very recent arrival in the very “last seconds” of it. At the same time, humankind has changed the planet radically during the last 250 years with long lasting effects. In order to at least slow global warming down, there are only a few years left. Thus, time pressure characterizes this temporal mismatch. To focus directly on the US-American cultural and political context, I will firstly look at the economic conditions of climate politics, specifically at the time of money in terms of speculation, calculated risk and uncertainty of the future as well as at the temporalities of everyday lifeworlds. Secondly, I want to discuss Richard Powers’s *The Overstory*, an obvious literary choice, and explore how fiction can narrate the possibilities and problems of environmental activism as well as speaking with, about, and for trees. My theoretical approach is posthumanism.

Professor Dr. **Ulfried Reichardt** holds the Chair of North American Literature and Culture at the University of Mannheim. He studied at the University of Heidelberg, Cornell University, and the Free University of Berlin, was assistant professor at the University of Hamburg, visiting professor at the University of Cologne as well as visiting scholar at Columbia University, the University of Toronto and the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, York University and the University of California at Santa Cruz and Santa Barbara. He received his Ph.D. at the Free University of Berlin in 1988 (*Postmodernity Seen from Inside*, 1991) and his Habilitation at the University of Hamburg in 1998 (*Alterity and History: Functions of the Representation of Slavery in the American Novel*, 2001). He has edited *Time and the African American Experience* (2000) and *Mapping Globalization* (2008), co-edited *Engendering Men* (1998) and *Network Theory and American Studies* (2015). Further publications include *Globalization: Literatures and Cultures of the Global* (2010) as well as essays on the dimension of time in literature and culture, on American Pragmatism, on music in America, on diaspora culture, and US-American authors of the 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. He was founder and speaker of the graduate program “Formations of the Global” (2004-2009) and principle investigator (with Regina Schober) of the research project “Probing the Limits of the Quantified Self” funded by the German Research Foundation (2015-2018).

RÜSKAMP EVA

## **Where the Wasteland Blossoms: Reclaiming Appalachia's Rural Communities for a Just Transition**

Southern and Central Appalachia constitute one of the most biodiverse and resource rich regions of the North American continent. It's mountainous landscapes with tree-covered hills, steep valleys and small riverbeds had afforded its inhabitants a scarce but independent life based on subsistence farming and hunting – from the pre-contact native populations to the first colonial settlers arriving in the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> century from poor regions in Northern Europe (particularly Scotland and Ireland).

Throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> and well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the region was a natural and cultural barrier between the North, the Deep South and the far West. Constant in- and outmigration helped turn Appalachia into a contact zone for diverse cultures, informing a deeply American hybrid culture at the margins of the new nation.

After the Civil War, however, Appalachia quickly became heavily exposed to the ever-growing demands for natural resources to power industrial development elsewhere in the nation. Since then, the region has been a ground zero for the extraction of timber, coal and – most recently – natural gas, turning large parts of it into industrial wastelands. In addition, Appalachia's landscape became profoundly by the expansive building dams of dams through the TVA and the leveling of mountains and valleys through MTR. Communities in Appalachia, which grew and diminished with the boom and bust of economic cycles, both profited and suffered from these developments. As a consequence, extreme poverty of the many, with all its social and physical consequences, grew alongside the increasing wealth of the few, forming new socially devastated human 'wastelands'. Meanwhile, the renewed migration in and out of the region carried 'Appalachia' well beyond the Southern mountains and deep into the American consciousness.

From these socio-cultural, economic and environmental developments emerged a complex region that is constitutive of all the contradictions which haunt the (American and indeed global) South: The (post-) industrial wastelands of mining and other resource extractions exist next to – and sometimes within – the breathtaking natural beauty of national and state parks such as the Smokey Mountains; the rich culture and heritage of Appalachia contradicts the persistence of stereotypes of its socio-cultural depravity still prominent in the national imagination; economic and political disparity long raging through large parts of Appalachia sets a stark contrast to the many environmental and labor movements which originated in the region to transform

American policy on issues from education to labor to the environment. Within these contradictions, I will argue, lie the lessons that Appalachia has to offer for a truly just and sustainable transition in rural spaces and beyond.

Appalachian scarcity and socio-cultural hybridity have made the region an example of resilience and produced generations of rural leaders which consider(ed) Appalachia a place of the future. I hope to raise questions about the implicit metro-normativity of transition research and policy, as well as help move the American South from the margins to the center of the debate over America's future.

Funded by the Andrea von Braun Foundation, **Eva Rüska****mp, M.A.** pursues interdisciplinary research in Southern Studies and the Environmental Humanities at the University of Freiburg. She holds a M.A. degree in American Studies from Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and has studied literature, history, politics and sociology at the University of Freiburg, the University of Oregon and the University of Western Brittany. Ms. Rüska<sup>m</sup>p is particularly interested in the intersection of governance research, cultural theory and environmental justice. In 2018, she completed a Visiting Scholarship at the University of Tennessee for her ethnographic field work. Since 2019, Ms. Rüska<sup>m</sup>p is an Associate Researcher and PhD Candidate with the English Department, regularly teaching cultural studies, American history and politics.

SAWCZUK TOMASZ

## **Leaving Names in the Summit Book: Ecocide and Hybrid Memoryscapes in Gary Snyder's *Danger on Peaks***

When thinking about Gary Snyder's poetry, prose and essays, the central point of their intersection is unmistakably located at the writer's ruminations over the coexistence of humans and nature, which has earned the poet a stature of a prominent green author not only among the Beats but also among the most significant nature-oriented writers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. One of the green themes addressed by Snyder which, for one thing, resonates exceptionally well with much of contemporary eco-critical thinking on the Anthropocene and, for another, challenges common perceptions of time and temporality, is ecocide, a notion occupying central position in the poet's 2004 collection entitled *Danger on Peaks*. By looking at the ways Snyder's texts coalesce the motifs of natural catastrophes, nuclear threat and the use of the atomic bomb in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, I intend to explore their correspondence to theoretical concepts devised by scholars such as Bruno Latour, Franz Broswimmer and Jessica Rapson (geostory, the history of life as the history of disasters, the fluidity of memory sites) and to demonstrate the hybrid nature of the poet's post-catastrophic landscape imagery, capable of traversing time and space as well as the binaries of the private vs. the public, the ordinary vs. the sublime, the Eastern vs. the Western.

**Tomasz Sawczuk** is Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Philology, University of Białystok, Poland. He has authored *On the Road to Lost Fathers: Jack Kerouac in a Lacanian Perspective* (Peter Lang, 2019), as well as a number of essays on twentieth-century American literature, film and Beat writers, including a chapter contribution to *The Routledge Handbook of International Beat Literature*. In 2022 he was a Visiting Research Fellow at Fordham University. His most recent research interests revolve around North-American concrete poetry, experimental literature and intermedia.

SMOLIŃSKI SEBASTIAN

## **Toward James Baldwin's theory of cinema: Intercepting white Hollywood and transcending African American identity in *The Devil Finds Work***

The paper is an analysis of one of the most important American texts on cinema, James Baldwin's book-length personal essay *The Devil Finds Work* from 1976. Combining film studies, American studies and race studies perspectives, the presentation will pose a thesis on the distinctiveness of African American film writing and the related distinctiveness of the African American view of Hollywood and classic cinema.

Reference to Anna Everett's book *Returning the Gaze: A Genealogy of Black Film Criticism, 1909-1949* will sketch the historical and theoretical background of African American film thought and will place Baldwin in this context. *The Devil Finds Work* grows out of Baldwin's fascination with Hollywood cinema and its ambiguous power, simultaneously projecting a hegemonic vision of white society and giving excluded subjects the opportunity to indulge in fantasies and benefit from the mechanism of projection-identification.

The paper aims to develop three arguments. First, I will point to the historical continuity of African American reflection on cinema and its critical, oppositional nature. Second, I will analyze the ways in which the signs, narratives and codes of Hollywood cinema are intercepted in Baldwin's account of his personal relationship with classic films. Third, I will pose the thesis that James Baldwin's film criticism builds an original theory of cinema, which in many ways foreshadows and anticipates today's reflection on the themes of identity and race.

**Sebastian Smoliński** – film scholar and critic, PhD student at the American Studies Center at the University of Warsaw. Co-author of several publications, including the Spanish-language monograph *La doble vida de Krzysztof Kieślowski* (2015), a book about African American cinema, and a Polish-English monograph of David Lynch. Recipient of the 2019-2020 Kosciuszko Foundation scholarship for teaching history of Polish film at Cleveland State University in Ohio. He is preparing his PhD dissertation about American film criticism and the construction of national identity.

SOLER I ARJONA SARA

## Queering Diasporic Writing: Memory, Temporality, and Form in Ocean Vuong's Works

“Every history has more than one thread, each thread a story of division,” Ocean Vuong writes in his novel *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* (2019). It is indeed the historical threads that have been brutally severed by American imperialism, forced migration, and the imperatives of assimilation, that he attempts to reweave again as a practice of survival by envisioning a form of queer writing. Drawing on his own experience as a Vietnamese refugee, Vuong situates a Vietnamese American queer protagonist at the center of his non-linear novel, which excavates the boy's family history to trace the multiple histories of displacement informing who he is today.

In order to do so, Vuong eschews the teleological, progress-oriented patterns of temporality that have been normalized in Western dominant narratives and draws on the classic East-Asian form of *kishotenketsu*. By devising this non-normative—and thus queer—narrative structure, the writer creates a tapestry of fractured diasporic memories which recovers the voices of those effaced by Western representation. The novel's queer form is certainly significant: written as a letter to the protagonist's illiterate mother, the text urges for the need of both diasporic relationality and utopian impulse. The potential of queer writing likewise informs Vuong's recent poetry collection, *Time Is a Mother* (2022), in which the writer's reconfiguration of time is again deemed pivotal—not only as a destructive agent, but also as a generative force. Most importantly, Vuong's poems capture this paradox—in content and form—as he imagines possibilities for resilience after both personal and collective loss.

**Sara Soler i Arjona** is a PhD student at the University of Barcelona and a predoctoral researcher at ADHUC Research Center for Theory, Gender, Sexuality (University of Barcelona). After graduating in English Studies at the University of Barcelona (2017), she went on to study a Master's Degree in Gender, Sexuality and Culture at University College Dublin, Ireland (2020). Her current research is structured around Queer Studies and Literary Studies, and analyzes the relationship that unites queer figures in contemporary North American fiction with the temporalities that they inhabit and the relationalities that they (re)formulate.

STULOV YURI

## **Cultural Appropriation in the work of American-Ghanaian and American-Nigerian writers**

Recent US literature has acquired new dimensions thanks to the work of writers who belong to different diasporas – Italian, Polish, Chinese, Indian, Ghanaian, Nigerian, etc., which demonstrates a new phenomenon – a certain tendency of the literatures of multiethnic and multinational countries towards transcultural or transnational literature created by writers who for various reasons have moved to the United States, adapted towards its culture but have preserved their cultural distinctiveness. Unlike multiculturalism that was characteristic of the development of US literature in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and voiced the aspirations of minorities, which called for equality and recognition, transculturalism presents itself as a form of hybridity leading to interpenetration and cross-fertilization of literatures that is obvious in the works of writers in polycultural countries like the USA, UK, France or Germany.

The paper will address the novels “Open City” by Teju Cole, “Americanah” by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and “Homegoing” by Yaa Gyasi which deal with African and American reality showing the complexity of appropriation of a culture, ways of adaptations to it and translation of African discursive dimensions in the American context or vice versa (in the case of “Americanah” by Adichie). On the one hand, the novels are rooted in African myths, history and orality of culture; on the other hand, they develop the Euro-American literary tradition, and, therefore, have become major events in contemporary US literature. The paper will show both similarities in the approach to the subject matter and specific qualities of each of the works under discussion. Human values that determine the lives of the characters of the novels emphasize their universality but also point out peculiarities of the worldview of people living in different parts of the world.

**Yuri Stulov** chaired the Department of World Literature at Minsk State Linguistics University till March 2021. He heads the Board of the Belarusian Association for American Studies and represents BelAAS on the Board of the European Association for American Studies. He was also editor of the “American and European Studies Biennial” published since 1996; head of the American Studies Center at the European Humanities University, Minsk (1996-2004) when the university was closed down. Instructor at American Studies Schools in Belarus, Ukraine, and Germany. Guest lecturer at Transbaikalian Pedagogical University, Chita, Russia, the University of Western Ontario, Canada, the University of California at Sacramento, the South Eastern University, Nanjing, China, and the



University of Gdansk, Poland. In 2005 Yuri Stulov got the Distinguished Leadership Award for Internationals 2005 from the University of Minnesota, U.S.A. His academic interests lie in the study of contemporary African American fiction. He has authored about 200 articles, conference papers, book reviews, and course books for students in British and American literature, education, methodology, and area studies. He is an alumnus of Fulbright and IREX programs and took part in the Salzburg Seminar in 1994 and SSASAA Symposia of 2012 to honor Emory Elliott and 2014.

SZMAŃKO KLARA

## Transcending “Eccentricity”? Toppling the Myth of White Exclusivity in Founding the Nation – Maxine Hong Kingston’s *China Men*

After tunneling into granite for about three years, Ah Goong understood the immovability of the earth. Men change, men die, weather changes, but the mountain is the same as permanence and time. This mountain would have taken no new shape for centuries, ten thousand centuries, the world a still, still place, time unmoving. He worked in the tunnel so long, he learned to see many colors in black. When he stumbled out, he tried to talk about time. ‘I felt time,’ he said. ‘I saw time. I saw world ... I saw what’s real. I saw time, and it doesn’t move. If we break through the mountain, hollow it, time won’t have moved anyway. You translators ought to tell the foreigners that.’  
(*China Men* 132)

In *China Men* Kingston undermines the long-persisting myth of white Americans as sole founders and pioneers of the United States of America. The ethos of a white Anglo-Saxon man as a sole originating and sustaining force behind the creation and development of the country is one more manifestation of white exclusivity and its propensity towards exclusion of racial and ethnic minorities. Shedding a spotlight on her Chinese Americans’ ancestors’ significant contribution to building the country, Kingston aims at reconstructing the official version of American history and recentering her Chinese immigrant ancestors from the margins to the center. Still, any recentering carries its own pitfalls, entailing the danger of replicating some of the dominant structures of power that one tries to undermine.

On the very first pages of the narrative the narrator identifies Chinese Americans as “eccentric” people in the United States (9, original emphasis). As if trying to transcend this eccentricity, the narrator’s father inscribes each nook and cranny of their family laundry with the term *Center*. In the last section of the narrative, “The Brother in Vietnam,” China (also known as the Middle Kingdom) is implicitly identified as center in relation to Taiwan, the place of “emigrants, rejects and misfits” (302). China is also identified as center in a tale about an exiled Chinese poet, Li Sao,

who had to leave the Center and “roam in the outer world” (256). The Center signifies China, while the outer world stands for other countries or outer most territories of China ruled by barbarians. The subchapter on Li Sao, the exiled Chinese poet, is placed strategically at the end of the “The American Father” section of the narrative, establishing a clear link between the modern day Chinese immigrant poet, the narrator’s father and China’s ancient, oldest poet. The last sentence of the Li Sao tale reads that he is remembered not only by the Chinese, but also by the Koreans, the Japanese, the Vietnamese, the Malaysians and the Americans, the nations that either Li Sao or his fellow Chinese immigrant poets of the later day might have roamed in.

Professor **Klara Szmańko** specializes in American literature, in particular American ethnic literature: Asian American and African American literature, also Anglo-American literature as well as American Studies. The recurring tropes of her publications are: whiteness, invisibility, visibility, visual dynamics, power dynamics, autobiography, transformational identity politics, multiculturalism, representation of space, mimicry, nationalism and gender relations. She is also the author of two books published in the U.S.: *Invisibility in African American and Asian American Literature: A Comparative Study* (McFarland 2008) and *Visions of Whiteness in Selected Works of Asian American Literature* (McFarland 2015). She was the chief organizer of the Polish Association for American Studies Annual Conference in 2019: *The Sound of Silence in American Literature, Culture and Politics* at the University of Opole. After the conference she co-edited the post-conference volume entitled *Rhetoric of Silence in American Studies*, published by the *Res Rhetorica* journal. She did her M.A. in 2002 and Ph.D. in 2005 at the University of Wrocław, habilitation at the University of Łódź in 2016. She is Associate Professor at the University of Opole, Poland.

ŚWIETLICKI MATEUSZ

## **The Silent Unseen and Underground Soldiers: Polish-Ukrainian Conflicts and Collaboration in American Young Adult Second World War Fiction**

Since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, more than ten million Ukrainians have crossed the Polish border. Notably, Poland – among Canada – was the first state to recognize Ukraine's statehood in 1991; moreover, in the last three decades, all Polish governments have supported Ukraine's fight for democracy – especially during the Orange Revolution (2004) and the Revolution of Dignity (2013/2014). However, the historical relationships between these two neighboring countries – located in what Timothy Snyder termed the “Bloodlands” – have been complex. Most importantly, the memory of the Second World War remains a bone of contention as the Polish and Ukrainian mnemonic discourses differ significantly. Most local children's and young adult authors avoid discussing such historical complexities and offer their readers simple narratives about victims and oppressors. Thus, it is remarkable that in the last few years, descriptions of the difficult Polish-Ukrainian relations have appeared in fiction written by Anglophone authors, for example, Lisa Grekul and Marsha Forchuk Skrypuch. I will study the representations of the complex Ukrainian-Polish/Polish-Ukrainian dynamics in Amanda McCrina's *Traitor* (2020) and *The Silent Unseen* (2022), two young adult novels set in Second World War Poland/Ukraine. Using teenage protagonists with liminal identities in her meticulously researched and historically accurate novels, McCrina, an American of Polish descent, not only showcases the historical complexity of the Bloodlands but also demonstrates that writing about such problematic topics as the legacy of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) and the Soviet/Nazi collaboration without misinformation and oversimplifications is possible.

Dr. **Mateusz Świetlicki** is an Assistant Professor at the University of Wrocław's Institute of English Studies and director of the Center for Young People's Literature and Culture. His most-recent book, *Next-Generation Memory and Ukrainian Canadian Children's Historical Fiction: The Seeds of Memory* (Routledge, 2023), examines the transnational entanglements of Canada and Ukraine. He was a Research Scholar at the University of Florida's Department of English (Kosciuszko Foundation Fellowship), a Fulbright scholar at the University of Illinois at Chicago (2018), a visiting scholar at the University of Toronto (2022), and has held multiple other fellowships (Munich, Kyiv, Harvard).

TARDI MARK

## “Silked with Phenomena”: Elizabeth Willis’s posthumanist ontoepistemology

From her earliest collections, *The Human Abstract* and *Second Law*, to more recent ones, such as *Meteoric Flowers* and *Address*, innovative American poet Elizabeth Willis has charted a unique posthumanist poetics. Inflected with thermodynamic arrows of time (“To look back / on gasoline as hoof and leaf”), quantum realities where a “particle (capable) must then decide,” the geological breadth of “how dirt thinks,” and neglected and repressed historical events, Willis’s poetry is inhabited by the eroticism of poisonous plants and witches, bees and blacklists, and tornados and forecasts as if told by William Blake upon a return from deep space. Working within the posthumanist framework of thinkers such as Donna Haraway (*When Species Meet*), Rosi Braidotti (*Nomadic Subjects*), and others, this presentation seeks to examine the ontoepistemology of Willis’s lyric subjects, which toggle between the micro- and macro-scales of human and nonhuman, planetary and galactic, invisible and imaginary, biological and alchemical, and private vs. political. Willis’s disruptions of voice and syntax offer a poetics of becoming and undoing where “When the ghost is on you, / you don’t even see it happen.” How does Willis’s animate the invisible in her poems, and, as Michael Palmer wonders, “from what site—or address—can [the poem] possibly speak in the profoundly unstable currents of our time?”

**Mark Tardi** is a writer and translator whose recent awards include a 2023 PEN/Heim Translation Grant and a 2022 National Endowment for the Arts Translation fellowship. He is the author of three books, most recently, *The Circus of Trust*, and his translations of *The Squatters’ Gift* by Robert Rybicki and *Faith in Strangers* by Katarzyna Szaulińska were published in 2021. Recent writing and translations have appeared in *Czas Kultury*, *Tupelo Quarterly*, *Denver Quarterly*, *The Scores*, *Full Stop*, *Interim*, *Circumference*, and in the edited volumes, *Odmiany Łapania Tchu*, *New Voices: Contemporary Writers Confront the Holocaust*, and *The Experiment Will Not Be Bound. Viscera: Eight Voices from Poland* is forthcoming from Litmus Press in 2024. He is on faculty at the University of Łódź.

TURNER RI J.

## **Surfacing Submerged Diasporic Critiques of the Construction of the American Polity: Rereading the New York Yiddish Press, 1906-1938**

Belarusian-born Jewish political philosopher Dr. Chaim Zhitlowsky (1865-1943) was instrumental in founding Jewish diaspora nationalist political movements in Eastern Europe at the turn of the twentieth century. In 1908 he emigrated to the United States, where he would spend the second half of his life trying to convince Jewish immigrants to join a movement to import an Eastern European multinational political model to America, as an antidote to the myth of the “melting pot,” which he regarded as hypocritical and manipulative. In the process, he prefigured critiques of the hegemonic mechanisms of American whiteness that would emerge into the mainstream only half a century later, in the wake of the Civil Rights Movement.

How should we read Zhitlowsky’s oppositional racial consciousness in light of the intervening century, during which American Jews ostensibly benefited enormously from the very whitening processes that Zhitlowsky abhorred? If his writings are merely naïve and anachronistic, how do we explain the fact that the themes he explored are still very much alive in American political thought in the twenty-first century, even if not among Jews? In addition to summarizing Zhitlowsky’s prescient critiques of American whiteness, in this paper I will also reflect on the tendencies in American collective memory that lead to the popular and scholarly neglect of figures like Zhitlowsky. Finally, I will propose revised institutional priorities and altered reading practices that would help American scholars better appreciate the continued value of early twentieth-century “white ethnic” diasporic presses as a source-base for American political philosophy.

**Ri J. Turner** is a third-year doctoral student and George L. Mosse Modern Jewish History Fellow at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, where she is advised by Prof. Tony Michels. She holds an MA in Yiddish from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, where she was awarded the Emily Budick Scholarship in American Studies. She is currently a 2023-2024 Foreign Languages and Area Studies Fellow in Judaistyka at the University of Wrocław, where she is translating an anthology of humor writing from the Warsaw interwar Yiddish press. She also teaches Yiddish at the Summer Seminar in Yiddish Language and Culture in Warsaw.

TYCZYŃSKA JAGODA

## **Bodies in Space (and Time): Cartesian Duality in Richard K. Morgan's *Altered Carbon* (2002)**

Human history can be organized according to two fairly stable axes: a horizontal axis denoting a linear perception of time, and a vertical axis mirroring the civil organization of societies. However, from the mythological image of Mount Olympus to the cyberpunk imaginings of the vertical noir, the cultural portrayals of the vertical axis appear to both constrict the timeline to depict documented human history as a never-ending “now” as well as to elongate the timeline by presenting it as a string of never-ending cycles. In light of these fluctuations, a world where an immortal human consciousness may limitlessly repeat the life cycle by inhabiting different bodies seems to effectively challenge both these forms of organizing human history.

In my presentation, I would like to analyze how the understanding of these two axes is affected by the concept of body switching in Richard K. Morgan's *Altered Carbon* (2002). First, by analyzing the plot's setting in the former city of San Francisco, I will examine how this location acts as a border for American time, space, and national mythology. Then, in reference to the distinguishing “American” features of Chandler's detective novels, I will focus on the fragmentation of American life (cf. Jameson) in the context of Morgan's fragmented bodies. Finally, by examining the tensions between local culturally-conditioned bodies and inter-galactic minds, I will explore how the repetitive inhabitation of bodies affects the linear perception of time while the fluidity of body identity subverts the notion of nation-states.

Jameson, Frederic. 2016. *Raymond Chandler: The Detections of Totality*. London and New York: Verso.

**Jagoda Tyczyńska** is a recent Master's graduate from the American Studies Center, University of Warsaw. Her M.A. thesis titled “Liberal Representations of the Working-Class in Post-2010 American Cinema” was awarded 1<sup>st</sup> place by the Polish Association for American Studies for the “Best American Studies Master's Thesis Written at a Polish University.” Her article “Silent Narratives and Post-Recession Anxieties in Debra Granik's *Winter's Bone* (2010)” will feature in the 2023 issue of the *Polish Journal for American Studies*. Her current research focuses on the depictions and political readings of interracial body swapping in science fiction.

VYSOTSKA NATALIA

## **Shakespeare in the American West: Telescoping the Bard in Time and Space**

By the historic moment when the Westward expansion in the USA gained momentum, Shakespeare has already become a national cultural icon in both its high and low varieties. According to James Shapiro, “the history of Shakespeare in America is also a history of America itself”, while Andrew Dickson argues that the British dramatist had been regarded as a central part of American identity since the Founding Fathers at least, so “it must have seemed only natural to many pioneers that he came along for the ride”. Over the lasting history of Americanizing Shakespeare his appropriation took a wide range of formats to serve the Americans’ own cultural needs and proceeded both down from the top and up from the bottom.

As pioneers moved west in the 19<sup>th</sup> c., “they often carried with them two cherished volumes: the Bible and Shakespeare” (A. & V. Vaughans). Moreover, they were shortly followed by (para)theatrical companies with Shakespeare’s plays as the core of their repertory keen on partaking of the fabulous wealth of the West. These processes recorded by historians and Shakespeare scholars on the both sides of the Atlantic are subject to fictional recycling by the late 20<sup>th</sup> – early 21<sup>st</sup> cc. authors. The paper deals with a version presented in Richard Nelson’s play *How Shakespeare Won the West* (2010). The relevant points on the chronotopical axis are, therefore, as follows: the 16<sup>th</sup> c. England – the 19<sup>th</sup> c. American West – the 21<sup>st</sup> c. US.

Relying upon the set of coordinates provided by “deep time, understood as temporal length added to the spatial width of the planet” (Wai Chee Dimock) the following trajectory of Shakespeare’s metamorphoses in the American West can be traced: remaking of original plays; refractions in the false mirrors of (un)professional productions; narrativizing them in the reviews, memoirs, diaries and (auto)biographies; summarizing of this heterogenous material by several generations of Shakespeare scholars and theatre historians. Finally, present-day reconstructions utilize Shakespeare appropriation mechanism in the n<sup>th</sup>-degree responding to America’s current social and cultural concerns.

**Natalia Vysotska** received her Doctoral degree in American literature from the Institute of Literature, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (1998). Current position – Full Professor, Theory and History of World Literature Department, Kyiv National Linguistics University. Scholarly



interests encompass American and British Literature; multi/transculturalism; theatre and drama in the USA. Her publications include three books and numerous essays addressing British and American fiction and drama published in Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, Greece, Germany, Poland, Romania and the USA. Member of the European Association of American Studies (EAAS). European Collegium for African American Research (CAAR). Fulbright Program Alumna (1995), Resident Scholar at the Kennan Institute (Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington, D.C., 2002). Participant in Salzburg Global Seminar in American Studies (2000, 2009, 2022). Current work-in-progress – *Shakespearean Presence in Contemporary American Drama*.

WIECZOREK PAULA

## ***Our History Is the Future: Spiralic Temporalities in Indigenous Speculative Fiction***

The main intention of the following paper is to examine the way such Indigenous writers as Cherie Dimaline and Rebecca Roanhorse explore the concept of time in their works. The writers mentioned above depart from Indigenous realism and the traditional representations of the colonial past; instead, they have turned to speculative fiction to refer to colonial history, represent its influence on the present situation of Native Americans and depict decolonized visions of the future. Their futuristic novels, *Marrow Thieves* and *Trail of Lightning*, focus on Indigenous people's lives and their struggle to preserve the natural environment that is disappearing due to human exploitation. In the selected novels, the ecological crisis is represented as a continuation of the era of colonialism, which extends through advanced capitalism. Instead of presenting the events in a linear progression, the writers present history as a continuum without a beginning and an end. The past and present bear almost the same meaning when a government's legitimacy derives from the ongoing occupation of stolen land as well as questionable interpretations and violations of Treaty negotiations. Referring to the works of such Indigenous scholars as Kyle Whyte, Zoe Todd, and Daniel Heath Justice, the paper discusses the impact of extractive industries on the lives of Indigenous communities and non-humans alike. The paper gives insights into the ways the novels reflect on current political conditions that impede action on climate change.

**Paula Wiczorek** (PhD) is Assistant Professor at the Department of English Studies, University of Information Technology and Management in Rzeszów, Poland. Her research interests include Indigenous studies, environmental humanities, and film studies. She is currently working on her book: *Imagining the Anthropocene Future: Body and the Environment in Indigenous Speculative Fiction*. She is a member of the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE).

WIĘCKOWSKA KATARZYNA

## **Always coming home: Climate crisis and the writing of utopia**

While literary responses to global environmental change have been varied, many of them have adopted a dystopian tone and offered bleak visions of the future, thus helping, as Ursula Heise (2015) claims, reinforce present-day perspectives and continue the business-as-usual approach to climate change. In this essay, I look into texts that depart from the prevalent apocalyptic mode and propose a more optimistic image of the future: neither narratives of catastrophes and extinction nor eco-modernist tales of techno-optimism, these “modest utopias” sketch scenarios of livable futures beyond the Anthropocene. In particular, I focus on Ursula K. Le Guin’s novel *Always Coming Home* (1985) and selected essays to discuss the role of fiction in the climate crisis and the need for a new kind of utopia. Novels, as Le Guin claimed in “The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction,” are best seen as medicine bundles “holding things in a particular, powerful relation to one another and to us” (1986). Accordingly, my exploration of Le Guin’s works traces the relations they have helped establish in contemporary critical theory and climate fiction and examines the latter’s efforts – both fictional and theoretical – to transform the present by imagining habitable futures through utopias that are participatory, peaceful, and nurturant, and that focus on process rather than progress and growth.

**Katarzyna Więckowska** is Associate Professor at Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, Poland. Her research interests include environmental criticism, feminist criticism, discourses of exclusion, and contemporary Anglophone literature; her most recent work focuses on hauntology, post-anthropocentric ethics of care, and solarpunk. She is the author of *Spectres of Men: Masculinity, Crisis, and British Literature* (2014), *On Alterity: A Study of Monstrosity and Otherness* (2008), and articles and chapters on gender, corporeality, the Gothic, spectrality, and authorship.

WILCZYŃSKA ELŻBIETA

## **Ndakinna, Weetamoo and James the Printer – Contributions of indigenous methodologies on the example of *Our Beloved Kin* by Lisa Brooks**

One of the cultures that definitely would benefit from a *deep time* approach and a long duration of history is American culture, especially if the source of knowledge about its history and geography were Native American cultures. Divergent indigenous cultures of Turtle Island have been longer on the American continent than the European cultures, yet they were unappreciated, displaced, and in many ways erased and silenced from mainstream American culture. This has been changing, and divergent indigenous authors have been revealing both their own ontologies and epistemologies, as well as new facts thanks to the application of indigenous methodology advised by the Native American Indigenous Studies Association. This has been a wider process of the so-called indigenization of knowledge, where global knowledge is supplemented with local knowledge and ways of understanding the past. In this paper, this process will be theorized and showcased on the example of the book *Our Beloved Kin. A New History of King Philip's War* (2018) by Lisa Brooks and a survey of indigenous methodologies (Pleasant, Wigginton, Wisecup 2018; O'Brien 2020; Wildcat 2005). Lisa Brooks, working in the archives on sources that were either ignored or misinterpreted in the past, has introduced to American culture new heroes, new tropes, new geographies, and new histories. Not only did she cast a new light on American history by telling a different story of King Philip's War from the one read from Mary Rowlandson's captivity narrative, but in the first place she made contemporary readers realize how much unknown was the early colonial geography of New England, which had its own names in different indigenous languages of that region and was never a wilderness, but a well-sustained system.

**Elżbieta Wilczyńska**, Ph.D. works in the Faculty of English in Adam Mickiewicz University, in Poznan, Poland at the Department of Studies in Culture. Her major field of interest involves American ethnic minorities, specifically Native Americans, their history, culture, identity, and place in contemporary America. Within this field she taught various courses and seminars. Other academic interests include Black studies and American and Canadian art as well as Australian and New Zealand cultures, with a focus on indigenous culture and art. Her publications concern Native Americans and teaching culture, the recent ones include "The Return of the Silenced: Aboriginal Art

as a Flagship of New Australian Identity”, „Indiańskie kontrnarracje – stara sprawa, nowe tropy, bohaterowie, konflikty”, *Historyka Studia Metodologiczne*, “Transculturation and counter-narratives: The life and art of the Wurundjeri artist William Barak”, *Journal of New Zealand and Pacific Studies*.