

Participant Bios

Tanja N. Aho (University of Leipzig, Germany)

Tanja Aho started out with a BA in Finnish and American/British Studies at the University of Greifswald and is now a graduate student of American Studies in Leipzig and one of the organizers of the conference. In her research she has been especially interested in minority literatures and representations of minorities, such as African American lesbians and white working-class men. Her MA thesis will focus on the representation of white working-class women in selected novels by Dorothy Allison, a Southern working-class writer; her presentation, however, is based on a paper she wrote on the transnational migration experience of Dominican-American women.

Ilgın Aktener (Ege University Izmir, Turkey)

Ilgın Aktener is a Master's student at Izmir Ege University studying in the field of American Culture and Literature. As a graduate of the Interpretation and Translation Department of Izmir University of Economics, she has comprehensive knowledge of translation studies and is interested in translation comparison in such fields as literature and cinema (subtitling and dubbing). She has been particularly engaged in Eugene A. Nida's *Dynamic Equivalence Theory*. As for American culture and literature, she is interested in studying cultures within the framework of cinema. She also has interests in Chicano literature, magic realism, and confessional poetry in terms of literature.

Ingrid Betz (University of Leipzig, Germany)

Ingrid Betz got her BA in Social Sciences with a focus on European Studies at the University of Siegen. She is currently enrolled in the MA American Studies program at the University of Leipzig and is one of the conference's organizers. She is mainly interested in politics and media issues.

Franziska Böhme (University of Leipzig, Germany)

After earning her BA degree from Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg with a major in American Studies, Franziska Böhme is currently enrolled in Leipzig's MA program and is one of the conference's organizers. Her research interests range from US constitutional law and political culture to human rights policy, with a special interest in the interdependence of politics and culture. Her MA thesis about US policy and discourse on human trafficking has been inspired by the paper she will present at the conference, which analyzes the depiction of human trafficking in the film *Trade*.

Felix Brinker (University of Hannover, Germany)

Felix Brinker is currently enrolled in the MA graduate program Advanced Anglophone Studies at Leibniz University Hannover, where he studied English and American Studies as well as Political Science from 2005-2009. He is mainly interested in popular culture, film, television series, science fiction, the graphic novel, theories of identity and culture as well as critical theories of capitalism and society. His paper will be mostly based on research conducted for his Bachelor's thesis, entitled "Searching for Earth, Finding America: Political Allegory and Representations of American National Identity in Battlestar Galactica."

Susan Büttner (University of Leipzig, Germany)

Susan Büttner is currently enrolled in the MA American Studies program at the University of Leipzig, Germany and is thus one of the organizers of the conference. Her general research interests are American history, arts, and architecture between 1900 and 1945. She is particularly interested in nativism and racism at the beginning of the twentieth century in form of the Ku Klux Klan. This topic is not just central to her BA thesis but will be further investigated in her MA thesis on the female side of racism using the example of the Women of the Ku Klux Klan.

Jakub Goralski (University of Wroclaw, Poland)

Jakub Goralski was born and raised in Gdansk, Poland. After finishing high school in 2003, he moved to the United States to study at DeAnza College in Cupertino, California. After two years he moved to San Diego where he graduated with a Bachelor's degree in International Security and Conflict Resolution from San Diego State University. Currently he is pursuing a Master's degree in Global Studies at Wroclaw University/Universität Leipzig. His research interests range from the European Union and its impact on other parts of the world, intercultural communication, and nuclear politics to development and security in Africa.

Serban D. Ionescu (University of Bucharest, Romania)

Serban D. Ionescu describes himself as a bit of an academic jack of all trades: When it comes to languages, he dabbled in linguistics, tried his hand at translations, and is currently pursuing cultural studies via the American Cultural Studies MA program at the University of Bucharest. As far as interests go, he is a self-described technology and SciFi nut. A bit of a geek, one might say. And he is fascinated by the interactions between the real and virtual society. As a result, his papers until now have dealt with the social, psychological, and artistic aspects of the Internet and parallels between the online and offline world.

Stephen Koetzing (University of Erlangen, Germany)

Stephen Koetzing studies British and American Cultural Studies, Ibero-Romance Studies, and American Literary Studies at the University of Erlangen. His research interests include Jewish American literature, Inter-American studies, American film, and post-modern literature. He is currently in his ninth semester of his studies and preparing to write his Master's thesis.

Terence Kumpf (Freie Universität Berlin, Germany)

A native New Yorker abroad since 2000, Terence Kumpf is a Master's student at the JFK Institute for North American Studies at the Freie Universität Berlin. His research areas currently include the cultural, political, and ecological dimensions of consumerism as well as the state of fantasy argument central to the New American Exceptionalism. Terence previously lived in Dresden where he taught English and wrote songs while briefly pursuing a career in music. He has also worked as a management consultant within the international American corporate structure (Amsterdam). He holds a BA in English from the State University of New York at Buffalo.

Kerri Mullen (Freie Universität Berlin, Germany)

Originally from Chicago, Kerri Mullen is a third semester MA student in North American Studies at the JFK Institute of the Freie Universität Berlin. Her focuses are literature and politics. Her research interests include guilt, the nation, liberalism, and the year 1973. She is currently seeking representation for a novel.

Benedikt Schäfer (University of Leipzig, Germany)

Benedikt Schäfer started out with a BA in Intercultural European and American Studies (IKEAS) at the University of Halle-Wittenberg. He is currently enrolled in the American Studies MA program at the University of Leipzig and is one of the organizers of the conference. His general research interests include aspects of race and class, contemporary political discourse in the American mass media, and representation of immigration issues in popular culture. His MA thesis, the topic of which is currently under development, will integrate these different aspects of American life.

Isabel M. J. Simão (University of Leipzig, Germany)

Isabel Simão comes from Portugal, where she graduated in Modern Languages and Literatures with a focus on French and English Studies from the Faculty of Fine Arts at Lisbon University. She is now enrolled in the American Studies MA program at the University of Leipzig and is one of the conference's organizers. Her main interests deal with the diversity of languages and cultures, so her Master's thesis will probably focus on the similarities between North- and South-American social movements and their effect on society.

Madalina Stalniceanu (University of Nottingham, Great Britain)

Madalina Stalniceanu has a BA in English and American Studies from the University of Iasi, Romania. She spent her year as an Erasmus student at Albert-Ludwigs-University in Freiburg, which was a great experience. Before starting her MA in American Studies at the University of Nottingham last September she worked as a volunteer for the British Council Library in her hometown. She is particularly interested in issues related to the Latino community in the US and in the representations of the American South with regard to literature, film, and history. Her final thesis will discuss the role of the 'religion card' in the 2004 American presidential election.

Hacer Veliöğlu (Ege University Izmir, Turkey)

Hacer Veliöğlu earned her BA degree in American Culture and Literature at Ege University in 2008 and in 2009 started the MA program. She has also been teaching in the Foreign Languages Department at the same university for two years now. Throughout her BA and MA studies she has had courses in American history, literature, art, aspects of American culture, US government, politics, and international relations as well as mythology and Western thought. But what she enjoys most are cultural studies, early 20th century American art, and modernist poetry.

Jasper Verlinden (Freie Universität Berlin, Germany)

Jasper (Joyce) Verlinden was born and raised in Antwerp, Belgium. He moved to Berlin in 2004, and ended up at the John F. Kennedy-Institute for North American Studies at the Freie Universität, where he is one of the last of a dying breed of Magister students. Jasper studies American and English literature and culture, and has a large scope of academic interests. One issue that seems to drive most of his work, however, is his quest for the ontological "essence" of identity. This quest has led him towards various research topics such as gender and the materiality of the body, image theory and psychoanalysis, and, most recently, emotional identity and seriality.

Janna Wanagas (University of Hannover, Germany)

Janna Wanagas is currently studying the Master of Advanced Anglophone Studies in her third semester at the Leibniz University of Hannover. She is also working as a project assistant for the American Studies department. The focus of her BA thesis ("A slave woman ought not to be judged by the same standard as others': The Transgression of Sentimental Boundaries in Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*") reflects one of her research interests. Currently, she is working on her Master's thesis in the field of Asian American literature, immigration history, (cultural) memory, and ghostly representations.

Jasmin Welter (University of Bonn, Germany)

Jasmin Welter is 23 years old and has been studying North American Studies, Political Science and French Studies at the University of Bonn and York University, Toronto since 2005. Her major research interests are transatlantic cultural and political relations and the interplay between politics and popular culture. In her MA thesis she wants to research the processes of celebrification and commodification with regard to the US presidency using the example of Barack Obama.

Natalie Wiertz (University of Münster, Germany)

Natalie Wiertz studied the BA program Literary, Cultural and Media Studies at the University of Siegen. In 2009 she earned her BA degree with a paper on the topic of "A new glance at fiction through Whiteness Studies: 'Blackness' in Stephen Crane's 'Maggie' and Toni Morrison's 'The Bluest Eye'." She is currently studying the MA program National and Transnational Studies: Literature, Culture, Language at Münster University. Her recent focus of interest has been the idea of the "Promised Land," especially in connection with immigration.

Note: Spelling, capitalization, and punctuation have been adjusted to the newest MLA style for all bios (excepting quotes and titles of works given). Certain words may have been altered, added, or deleted for clarification purposes.