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The reader's first section lists participants with their home institution, current project working title (dissertation, habilitation, etc.), and some few keywords on their academic interests.

The reader's second section contains the presentation titles, presentation abstracts, and contextual information, including a short bibliography and keywords.

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# Conference Participants

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### Working-Class Literature, Food Studies, Ethnic Literatures, Gender and Sexuality Studies

#### no working title

- Smellancholy - Smell, Power, and Memory in Postcolonial and Transnational Literature
- Transnational and Postcolonial Studies, Gender Studies, Critical Race Studies, Olfaction, Memory and Trauma

#### Agency in the Novels of Octavia Butler

- African American Literature, the Fantastic, Octavia Butler, Agency

#### Identity Construction in Iranian American Self-Writing

- Self-Writing, Ethnic Literature, Identity Construction

#### From Walt Whitman to Federico García Lorca to Paul Auster to Antonio Muñoz Molina: Constituting the Self in New York City

- Gender Studies, Intercultural, Transcultural Studies

#### The American Jew - Visions of a Restored Jewish Identity in the Novels of Edward Lewis Wallant

- Holocaust Literature, Austrian Literature (early 20th century), Weimar Classicism, Aesthetics

#### "The Right Sort of Immigrant" Eugenics, Immigration Restrictions and the Use of Type Photography

- US History 1890-1930, Racism, Nativism, Arts, Architecture 1900-1945

#### The Entangling Circles of Identity. Dislocation and Reconstruction in the Novels of Toni Morrison

- Identity Construction, Narrative Discourse, Tension, Perspective, Representation, Entanglement, Negotiation

#### On the Road to Genotopia: The Biotechnological Revolution in Anglophone Literature and Film

- Imagology, Literary Translation, Utopian Fiction

#### Metaphors, Metaphysics and the Search for Meaning

- Transcendentalism
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PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS

Daniela Babilon

Smellancholy: Smell, Power, and Memory in Postcolonial and Transnational Literature

In literary works of art, can the motif of smell be a means of social criticism? Can the representation of odor be used to racialize, classify or gender people? I argue: yes, it can!

Although the sense of smell is vital to our experience of the world, as Danuta Fjellestad rightfully proclaims, in literary criticism, it is one of the most neglected subjects. Analyzing references to smell offers intriguing new ways of approaching literature. In my lecture, I will explore how the motif of smell is deployed in selected works of literature to draw the readers’ critical attention to socio-political topics such as transnationalism, (trans)migration, postcolonialism, and discrimination. Focusing on Toni Morrison’s short story “Recitatif,” Denise Chávez’s “Evening in Paris,” and Arundhati Roy’s novel The God of Small Things, this lecture will emphasize how individuals as well as entire marginalized social groups are classified through ascriptions of smell and how power relations are thus perpetuated. In a second step, then, I present how odor references can uncover, criticize and deconstruct such classifications, thus adding to the force of the social criticism. These analyses indicate that we have to conceptualize smell as a highly significant social phenomenon.

Contextualization

Smell is a subtle but highly powerful phenomenon in contexts of power, discrimination and oppression. Thus, in my dissertation project on postcolonial and transnational literature, I investigate how the motif of smell is deployed in order to reflect, criticize and undermine power relations along the lines of gender, ‘race’/ ethnicity, class, sexuality, nationality, and religion etc. My research poses the following questions:

• In analyses of postcolonial and transnational literature, what is the function of the motif of smell with regard to dimensions of inequality like gender, ‘race’/ ethnicity, social status, sexual orientation, nationality or religious faith?
And more precisely: How is ‘smell’ deployed in literary works to draw the readers’ critical attention to socio-political topics such as postcolonialism, (trans)migration, racism or gender discrimination?

I argue that individuals as well as entire marginalized social groups are classified and oppressed through olfactory representations and symbolisms in literary works of art. The aim of my research is to analyze how odor references – especially unconventional interpretations or re-evaluations of smell – can uncover, criticize and deconstruct such oppressive power structures. Agreeing with the American scholar Danuta Fjellestad, I plan to demonstrate that smell “carries a great subversive potential” and that it “can enforce social structures or transgress them, unite people or divide them, empower or disempower.” This emphasizes that smell is not only relevant in literature but also as a social category.

Keywords
Perception of Smell, Power Structures, Transnationalism, Postcolonialism, Deconstruction

Bibliography

Nadine Boettcher

Metropolitan Masculinity: Constituting the Male Self in New York City

The analysis of masculinity in the context of social sciences, humanities, and cultural studies has grown extensively over the last years. Whereas masculinity was regarded as a rather exotic subject during the last decade of the 20th century, it has recently gained in prominence in the humanities. This discussion includes the examination of hegemonic masculinity (as defined by R. W. Connell) and how it influences male identity. In this context, imperialism is being acknowledged as a major
influence on the establishment of metropolitan masculinity. But how do the metropolis and masculinity determine each other?

I will investigate the extent to which the Northern American concept of hegemonic masculinity influences the shaping of a metropolitan male identity and vice versa. To what extent is hegemonic masculinity significant for constituting the metropolitan male self? I will also focus on New York City as the place where the male self struggles to shape its identity. What role does the metropolis play in this process? What impact does metropolitan life have on the individual male self? While the order and vitality of modern New York City oftentimes mirrored the attributes of the male self, the growing chaos of the metropolis did not threaten the self’s constitution but rather contributed to shaping its identity. However, what has happened to this metropolitan male self? Is the established topos of the metropolitan self experiencing a crisis due to the projected changes in masculinity in general? In order to discuss these questions, I will take a close look at Paul Auster’s City of Glass focusing on the relationship between the protagonist Daniel Quinn and New York City.

Contextualization
The topic of the paper “Metropolitan Masculinity: Constituting the Male Self in New York City” can be linked to the larger project of my dissertation which also deals with the constitution of the self in New York City. In addition to Paul Auster’s The New York Trilogy, my dissertation focuses on selected works by Walt Whitman, Federico García Lorca and Antonio Muñoz Molina. In the context of these selected works New York City is being investigated as a place of cultural transition and a space of identity shaping through (self-)narration.

Keywords
Identity, Metropolis, Masculinity, Cultural Transition, Self-Narration

Bibliography
Memory and the Narrative Construction of Collective Identity in Toni Morrison’s Novel Paradise

The paper analyses the narrative construction of identity in the novel Paradise by Toni Morrison, exploring intrafictional representations of collective consciousness and the function of memory in the process of identity formation as well as metafictional issues regarding narrative and identity. Memory offers the quasi-narrative material of historical facts, imagery and myths that collective identity draws on, while the stories it engenders allow for the temporalization of a pre-linguistic sense of self. In the novel Paradise, community identity is articulated through a series of mystified stories and sedimented collective memories that are embedded in the main third person narrative and usually presented as activated through the perceiving and remembering consciousness of different characters.

Internal narrative discourses and personal recollections are interwoven with ‘collectively objectified’ narratives that have shaped the identity of the community and have become a narrative representation of its continuity and individuality. In the same time, myths of uniqueness and ethnic purity are interpreted and used socially and politically in an act of justice designed to protect the collective from the threat of disintegration and decentralization and to ensure the autonomy of community values. In a continuous narrative interplay between past and present, memory is a channel for collective imagery and beliefs, a medium for the crystallization of collective identity and ideology by means of inherited narratives reflected in external and inner discourses of individual characters as well as in the main impersonal narrative that structures the novel.

While on an intrafictional level narratives are the very material through which collective consciousness is formed and community identity is preserved, in a metafictional reading the construction of a narrative identity that subordinates memory and the collective system of values and beliefs brings forth the matter of the reliability of the narration and the degree to which imagination and memory interweave, accounting for fictionalization, social, political or ideological distortion and mythicization.
Contextualization

My PhD thesis—The Entangling Circles of Identity. Dislocation and Reconstruction in the Novels of Toni Morrison—examines the narrative representation of identity in Toni Morrison’s novels, focusing on the function of tension, fracture and dislocation in the construction of identity discourses and on the degrees of interdependence of various levels of self-definition (racial, community, social, family, gender, moral, sexual, personal identity). Analyzing both the poetics and the intrafictional level of Toni Morrison’s works, my thesis explores the interplay between deconstruction, disintegration, dissemination and forms of transformation, restructuring or ‘narrative repair’. Perspective is a fundamental factor in the process of identity formation and for the continuity/discontinuity of identity discourses. Forms of negotiation between different points of view having personal, collective, political or ideological basis as well as paradox and conflict between different identity codes, representations and markers are narratively articulated in the rendering of power relations and in the representation of various acts of (self-)definition. Similarly, temporally conditioned differences in perspective and understanding are reflected in narrative identity and can prove to have catalytic value. The relations between different discourses involved in the ‘negotiation’ of identity as well as the forms and results of tension lead to structural patterns which shape Toni Morrison’s works (polarity, fluidity, continuity, fragmentariness, hybridity, etc.) that my PhD thesis approaches both synchronically and diachronically. In the narrative rendering of Gestalt (either individual, or collective), tension can have evolutionary value, as identity is configured according to integration/repression and transformation/preservation principles.

In the discussion about narrative identity that is covered in the first chapter of my thesis, the analysis of the formation of collective identity and of the interplay between different discourses, social and community codes and identity markers includes the novel Paradise, one of the most significant of Toni Morrison’s works in this respect. This novel is also relevant for the intrafictional rendering of tension: conflict is here a strongly polarizing factor that reinforces community identity and ensures the preservation of collective consciousness, but its value is not evolutionary, as it doesn’t lead to a redefinition of values or (individual or collective) sense of self.

Keywords

Narrative Identity, Perspective, Conflicting Discourses, Dislocation, Identity Markers

Bibliography


**Stephan-Alexander Ditze**

**On the Road to Genotopia: The Biotechnological Revolution in Anglophone Literature and Film**

From the moment Aldous Huxley's dystopian blueprint *Brave New World* saw the light of day in 1932, authors and filmmakers from the English-speaking world have shown an increasing fascination with the potential impact of modern biotechnology on man’s physical, psychological, social, and political existence. In his study *Our Posthuman Future* (2002) Francis Fukuyama points out that the advent and progress of modern biotechnology is likely to ring in the new era of utopian thinking. He also notices that Huxley was the first to realize the stunning efficiency of political systems which no longer have to resort to torture, persecution, and education to synchronize their subjects – as was the case with the Oceanian leaders of George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Truly modern political systems tailor their subjects *ab ovo*. Since the discovery of the structure of the human DNA by Francis Crick and James Watson, Anglophone authors and filmmakers have not only chronicled but often spearheaded the advance of the biotechnological revolution by extrapolating its potential consequences in a eutopian and – more often – dystopian fashion. Recent examples that testify to this fascination are Andrew Niccol’s movie *Gattaca* (1997) and Michael Crichton's novel *Next* (2006). My study aims at ascertaining representations of the biotechnological revolution in fiction and films from the first half of the 20th century up to the present day. The scope of my research corpus ranges from films and novels of science (*Wissenschaftsroman*) to truly ‘genotopian’ fiction, that is works in which biotechnology is presented as an essential instrument of the political power structure.

In order to determine a work’s position within this spectrum, I will start my inquiry by introducing a new analytical tool to define the demarcations of the genre of utopian fiction. This analytical tool is based on criteria that allow literary scholars to classify fiction or film as eutopian, dystopian or none of the above.
All works of the research corpus deal with the impacts of modern biotechnology on individuals and trans-individual entities such as interpersonal relationships, entire societies, or even the world as a whole. The analytical tool proposed here must therefore also be suited to ascertain those impacts in both a systematic and intersubjectively traceable way.

In his major work *Social Systems* (1995), the German sociologist Niklas Luhmann set forth a general theory of society that remains unsurpassed in thoroughness and accuracy. Purposely running counter to the traditions of Western political philosophy, Luhmann replaces all anthropocentric views of society by a systems-based approach. In a noteworthy contrast to ontological social theories, Luhmann rejects geographically defined frontiers, the assumption of a commonly shared morality or even the alleged ethnic or biological homogeneity of a group of human beings as defining criteria of societies. Moreover, Luhmann evicts the human individual from its privileged position as a *zoon politikon* and thus as the smallest natural cell of any commonwealth. According to Luhmann, societies are not made up of human beings, but like human beings themselves, societies are made up of autopoietic, that is self-reproductive systems – with a system being any entity that works on the basis of a specific mode of operation that is inherent only to this one system and simultaneously constitutes the boundary to all systems in its environment. Physiological processes, for instance, form the specific mode of operation that characterizes organic systems, whereas the processing of ideas is typical of psychic systems. Social systems, finally, operate on the basis of communications, that is a three-tier process of selection comprising the steps of information, transmission, and comprehension. Every system forms an environment to all other systems as its specific mode of operation is not integral to any system in its environment.

Social systems fall into three subtypes. Interaction systems, the most basic type of systems, which emerge whenever and wherever at least two people are present, at least perceiving each other and, thus, engaging in communication. While interaction systems may form spontaneously and dissolve once communication ceases, organisational systems are designed for longer duration by imposing regulations for joining and leaving the system. Societies, however, are comprehensive social systems comprising all interaction systems and organizational systems and thus the totality of all communication. Nevertheless, societies, in return, are differentiated into a variety of function systems such as the legal system, the systems of science, art, politics, economics, and religion that help to reduce social complexity by applying their own codes within the overarching operational mode of communication. Despite being separated from each other by a specific mode of operation, systems may be interrelated in varying degrees by structural coupling. From this perspective,
human beings are by no means an integral part of the social system. Rather, every human being partakes of an organic system and a psychological system both of which are structurally coupled.

This distinction of human beings into organic and psychic systems allows the literary scholar to separately ascertain the fictionalized impact of modern biotechnology on the two major realms that constitute the human condition. By the same token, the impact of technological progress on interaction systems, organizational systems and societies as depicted in a specific film or piece of fiction can be registered systematically.

Organic systems and societies constitute the two extreme poles of a spectrum on which every work of the corpus can be located. The specific location of a work depends on the specific system which is portrayed to be mostly affected by the impact of the biotechnological revolution. Works that predominately focus on impacts affecting organic and psychic systems can at best be registered as novels of science. By contrast, it is only when biotechnological research is shown to have impacted social systems (interactional systems, organizational systems, or entire societies with their variety of function systems) that the classification system applied here warrants to label a work “utopian.” Works of a utopian nature form the highest conceivable degree of extrapolation as a current trend is portrayed to have an effect not only on organic and psychic systems, but has become a trans-individual phenomenon by impacting social systems. The stage of a genuine biotechnological utopia has been reached once biotechnological methods have become an integral element in the functioning of the political system and its power structure.

The explanatory power of this hermeneutic tool for the analysis of utopian fiction will be demonstrated by short analyses of select items of the corpus. Finally, an interesting phase shift between the fictional and scientific discourses will be identified; a case in which the fictional extrapolation of a once current development in the field of biotechnology has eventually been overtaken by scientific reality.

Kate Dulmage

German and French Influences on New England Transcendentalism

Transcendentalism is a literary movement comprising of various European origins, none of which can be directly determined as weighing heavier than the other in terms of their influence. A plethora of research has already been conducted as to the particular German philosophic origins, specifically as identified in Fichte, Schelling, and Kant. The term Transcendentalism itself, of course, was
coined by Kant in his *Critique of Pure Reason*. However, Kantian philosophy, for example, veers quite in another direction and is not considered at all similar to New England Transcendentalism.

After careful consideration of the literary analysis which has thus far been accepted in the study of origins, I can agree with such authors as Octavius Frothingham and Lawrence Buell that the German influences on New England Transcendentalism were mainly conceived from second-hand, abstract knowledge of the general philosophic, revolutionary spirit which they revealed in their research.

It is true that Ralph Waldo Emerson and Margaret Fuller both read some original versions of Goethe, Fichte, and Schelling along with the translations which came from the Scottish Coleridge and Carlyle. It was, however, the knowledge and influence of the French Eclectics, particularly Cousin, Constant and Jouffroy, which influenced the movement considerably more as a whole.

I intend to investigate the impact which these particular French influences had on New England Transcendentalism and, in turn, to elicit how they can be interpreted in American literature. Besides the French Eclectics, my project will provide a detailed analysis of Rousseau's *Rêveries du promeneur solitaire*, as well as the philosophy of André Gide.

The reformist, revolutionary, and independent spirit is what characterizes the literature and philosophy of New England Transcendentalism. In my dissertation I will demonstrate how these characteristics stemmed from the individualism of the French Revolution and the development of intellectualism and self-introspection among 19th century French authors which is reflected in the foundations of New England Transcendentalism.

**Contextualization**

My presentation will briefly describe the two schools of European influences on New England Transcendentalism, namely the German philosophers (Fichte, Schelling, and Kant), and the French Eclectics, (Cousin, Constant, and Jouffroy). Many prominent scholars have previously analyzed and debated the extent to which Transcendentalism’s origins can be attributed to German philosophy and literature.

I, however, will demonstrate the manner in which the French influence can particularly be seen in New England Transcendentalism. My project will encompass this aspect and focus on how the influences of 19th century French literature and philosophy affected New England Transcendentalism, and how these influences can be seen in American literature.
Keywords
New England Transcendentalism, Kant, Fichte, French Eclectics, American Literature

Bibliography


Verena Harz

Uncanny Selves: The Challenge of Hybridity in Nella Larsen’s *Passing* and Danzy Senna’s *Symptomatic*

A hundred years after W. E. B. Du Bois famously asserted that the color line would be a major problem of twentieth-century America, its ongoing significance is reflected in both literary and academic discussions. The past three decades have witnessed a considerable interest in discourses challenging racial binaries, as indicated by the ascendance of concepts of “hybridity” in cultural criticism. In theories of hybridity the rhetoric of doubling and splitting is prominent. The dualistic notion of hybridity in terms of a “double-consciousness” (Du Bois), in which the “Negro” and American identity are pitted against each other, has been superseded by the concept of hybridity as a method of splitting and doubling that displaces and cross-cuts strictly binary structures of self and other and overrides the notion of the world sketched in simple black and white.

In Nella Larsen’s *Passing* and Danzy Senna’s *Symptomatic* the figure of the double is used as a method to dislocate and/or relocate the color line and interrogate its binary logic. Through the characters of Irene Redfield and Clare Kendry, *Passing* explores what Carla Kaplan has identified as a 1920s “tension between, on the one hand, an impulse to stabilize and fix identity and, on the other hand, the beginnings of our own social constructionist arguments for its destabilization” (“Undesirable Desire” 153). Epitomizing excessive desire and transgressiveness and hybridizing notions of race, gender, sexuality, and class, Clare threatens to completely unhinge Irene’s clearly directed and strictly circumscribed life as a New Negro woman. Forced to face a repressed ambiguity uncannily expressed in Clare, Irene is brought to the brink of extinction, which is only
averted by Clare’s six-story plunge from a rooftop apartment. *Symptomatic* also ends with the public fall of its double figure. Initially, the unnamed narrator, a “movement child” caught in a racial limbo, sees a reflection of herself in her co-worker Greta Hicks on grounds of a “shared” biracial background. However, this desire for recognition and a multiracial identity is shown to be deadly. Greta’s growing possessiveness of the narrator and her obsession with sameness, both symptomatic of America’s violent history of biracial displacement, culminate in her attempt to kill the narrator and in her own death. In the end, the narrator decides to free herself from the claims of racial identity and embrace a hybrid existence in the liminal space of postmetropolitan L.A.

In *Passing* and *Symptomatic*, the doubles function as an external manifestation of the protagonists’ repressed wishes in terms of racial identity, as reminders of a disowned past and as a threat to the protagonists’ integrity, which can, ultimately, only be contained by the doubles’ death. Through methods of doubling, these novels deconstruct racial binaries while at the same time revealing the violent mechanisms through which difference is recuperated into a framework of self and other.

**Contextualization**

In my dissertation, I analyze novels by African American writers which interrogate the color line and explore the possibilities of hybridity through black-and-white biracial characters. I test the heuristic value of theories of hybridity (Anzaldúa, Bhabha) to explain these novels’ engagement with the color line and racial identity. The body of texts includes Nicole Bailey-Williams’s *Floating* (2004), Jessie Fauset’s *Plum Bun* (1928), Nella Larsen’s *Quicksand* (1928) and *Passing* (1929) and Danzy Senna’s *Caucasia* (1998) and *Symptomatic* (2004).

**Key words**

Hybridity, Racial Identity, Color Line, Biracial Characters, African American Writers

**Bibliography**


**Johannes Hauser**

***Going On “Swimmingly”: The Urban Spaces of Benjamin Franklin’s Autobiography***

My presentation will focus on the figuration of the city in Benjamin Franklin’s *Autobiography*, a topic that is part of my dissertation project on urban spaces in early American literature.

Starting in the second half of the eighteenth century, American writers created urban spaces in their texts to define the meaning of literature and the practices of authorship in their contemporary societies and economies. Though demographically almost insignificant until the latter half of the nineteenth century, the presence of fictional urban spaces in the primary media of Enlightenment and the American revolutionary period, was, accordingly, all the more important: cities – the classical place of republican social practices – had to be supplied by literature. Thus texts provided the space to challenge and negotiate ideas of political, social, and economic participation. Their cities were pivotal in a period when the republicanism of the founding fathers’ generation met liberalist ideas of self-governance which were rising in importance and were modeled on the idea of spatial systems, e.g. the market and society.

Benjamin Franklin’s *Autobiography* plays a particular role in this context. The text presents a number of self-consciously textual performances in an urban realm, putting conceptions of the public sphere to a test.

Its celebration of an exemplary construction of a (literary) self by bookkeeping practices is intricately bound to the spatial practices which shape its representation of Philadelphia: the rectilinear grid in the notebook recording the narrator’s project of “self improvement” finds its analogue in the town’s grid-patterned streets, which, just like the self, are subject to speculative projects of fiction. This analogical model helps the text in its justification of a contested category in eighteenth-century political theory, namely (self-) interest, by tying the apologetic creation of a (white and male) middle class out of the premodern middling classes by seemingly parainstitutional practices (like the “invisible hand” of the market) to an imaginary universal regularity – a fiction
which has to be maintained, however, by the description of very visible bodily and linguistic performances in the city’s streets. The Autobiography’s urban spaces thus establish both the text’s transgression and its simultaneous containment.

Contextualization

Keywords
Early American Literature; City; Self and Identity; Fiction; Public Sphere

Bibliography

Rainer Hillrichs

Agency in Transformation: The Emergence of the YouTube Interface

When YouTube went online in April 2005, the new video platform enabled Internet users to upload and present video clips for free. Compared to television and other media, its restrictions on form and content were low. Since then, the platform has been growing tremendously and put to use in numerous ways. Video blogging is one of its most popular uses and central to YouTube’s common culture (Burgess and Green 94). My dissertation will provide the first comprehensive scholarly engagement with this cultural practice. Aspects in view are modes of performance in video blogs, the aesthetics of performance and of moving image form, the negotiation of agency in the evolution of YouTube’s interface, and the appeal of the (at that time) new medium YouTube and of video blogs in particular. In order to deal with these diverse aspects, I will employ various methods of
film, media, and cultural studies. The working title of my project is *Poetics and Politics of Video Blogging*. I have written first complete and coherent drafts of chapters 1 and 2.

**Contextualization**

In my presentation I intend to offer you a few problems that I am currently dealing with or that will be pressing in the near future. My areas of interest for the presentation and discussion are the following chapters:

1 Conditions of Video Blogging
   1.1 History of Online Video
   ...
5 The Question of Agency
   5.1 The Evolving Agency of the Interface
   5.2 Uses of the Interface in Video Blogging
   5.3 Interdependencies of Uses

**1.1 History of Online Video**

My current draft of 1.1 is far too long because it overlaps with 5.1 “The Evolving Agency of the Interface.” There are complete paragraphs that should be copy-pasted into the as-yet unwritten chapter 5.1. At least in part the evolution of the YouTube interface needs to be in view in a “History of Online Video.” But how much talking about the interface is necessary in 1.1 – taking into account that I am dealing with interface issues in 5.1 as well?

**5.1 The Evolving Agency of the Interface**

One of my basic arguments is that YouTube’s interface evolved in the dynamic interaction of the company YouTube, different groups of users, and other parties like copyright holders and the press. Furthermore, that the agency to release videos evolved all along. I conceive of agency both in terms of power and quality of users’ participation. In chapter 5.1 I want to illustrate this interaction by tracing significant changes of the interface in 2005 and 2006 and the activities of the parties involved. My texts of reference are the company blog, YouTube layouts stored at the Internet Archive, YouTube clips and channels, and press coverage. In my presentation I will provide an example of these interactions.

**5.2 and 5.3**

While the agency of the interface is approached as a possibility in 5.1, the ways video bloggers put this interface to use are the focus of the remainder of chapter 5. Beyond presenting the uses of the interface by themselves, I want to examine how each of these uses depends on the other: How does
documentary becomes communication in video blogs? How do video bloggers give an account of themselves via music videos for pop songs? Thus far, my plan has been to individually present these aspects or functions in 5.2 and to illustrate their intersections in 5.3. However, I am not sure anymore if this is such a good idea. Maybe functions and their relationship should be dealt with together, in one subchapter?

**Alternative subchapter: 5.3 Intertextuality: Homage vs. Parody?**

In case I combine 5.2 and 5.3, I have an idea for an alternative subchapter 5.3 which might deal with an important issue that does not have a place in the project yet. In the YouTube scholarship to date the intertextual activities of YouTubers in self-directed music videos, re-enactments of movie scenes, impersonations of other video bloggers and of celebrities are either conceived of in terms of fandom (Henry Jenkins) or spoofing (Rebekah Willett). However, if we look at the clips of the corpus of my project, things appear to be a lot more complex. In an alternative chapter 5.3 I might approach the intertextuality of video clips on YouTube beyond the dichotomy of homage vs. parody.

**Keywords**

New Media; Moving Images; Participation; Methods; Intertextuality.

**Bibliography**


**Daniel Holder**

“*The Story of a Birthday*?; W. E. B. Du Bois’s *In Battle for Peace and African American Life Writing as Resistance to McCarthyism***

My Ph.D. project concerns itself with African American ‘responses’ to McCarthyism, the anticommunist witch-hunt of the late 1940s and 1950s during the Cold War. I will look at early U.S.
Cold War culture and McCarthyism primarily on a discursive and narrative level, arguing that on such a discursive level one of the most crucial functions of McCarthyism was to re-write the identity of its (primarily) leftist victims, that is, to smear them and to attach a stigma to their identity, altering them negatively as ‘Un-American’ and ‘subversive.’ This then, of course, resulted oftentimes in actions of what Louis Althusser termed the ‘repressive state apparatus’ and in harsh material effects such as the cancellation of passports, the loss of jobs, harassment by the FBI, deportation or imprisonment. While this claim is indeed quite obvious, I suggest that the re-writing of McCarthyite smears of ‘Un-Americanism’ and of the stigmatized victims’ identities works on a similar level; on the level of auto-/biographical narration. While oftentimes respective attempts to clear the stigmatized self resulted in public statements of various nature through which the victims of McCarthyism claimed their ‘Americaness’ and took pains to distance themselves from Communism and from the ‘subversive’ label, quite a few individuals tried to record their ‘story’ through more elaborate and detailed accounts of their life by recurring on autobiographical or biographical narration in various forms (e.g. elaborate autobiographical narration in the context of court testimonies, having people write a biography/biographical account on their behalf and in their defense, ‘full-fledged’ autobiographies etc.).

Following these assumptions, I will focus on the attempt of such stigmatized individuals to rewrite their smeared identity through what I understand in broader terms as ‘life writing,’ including both biographical as well as autobiographical writing. I will not focus on such auto-/biographical responses to McCarthyism in general (this would be a much too vast topic for one dissertation, concerning both the primary source material as well as the methodology) but narrow down my choice of ‘responses’ to African American responses, primarily for two reasons. First, focusing on African American auto-/biographical responses acknowledges the special tradition autobiographical writing holds in African American literary production. Since its inception in the eighteenth century with the slave narrative, autobiographical writing has played a key role within the context of an African American literary tradition. Within this tradition, acts of autobiographical narration must be understood as inherently political, as an “ultimate form of protest” through which “these writers could at once shape a public ‘self’ in language and protest the degradation of their ethnic group by the multiple forms of racism” (Gates Jr., “Introduction: On Bearing Witness” 3). In this respect, I argue that the McCarthy era, a time where the leftist (African) American “public self” was heavily under attack, provides a cultural framework in which the recurrence of a genre which historically offered this “ultimate form of protest” is of special relevance. Secondly, focusing on such African American responses to McCarthyism also takes into account a diachronic and historiographical
dimension; the question of race, class and the early Cold War and if and how McCarthyism affected the African American civil rights movement, since ‘red-baiting,’ particular in the South, was often used as a technique with which to ‘contain’ the African American fight for freedom and full equality. Summing up, the goal of this project is to investigate the place of African American life writing during McCarthyism and in particular on how this genre functions as a unique cultural space of narrating respective resistance to McCarthyite stigmatization. In this way, this project will analyze auto-/biographical texts among others by African American intellectuals such as W.E.B. Du Bois, Paul Robeson, Benjamin Davis Jr., Claudia Jones, Esther Cooper Jackson, Shirley Graham and Pettis Perry which deal with the anticommunist witch-hunt of the late 1940s and 1950s.

In my paper, I will focus on W.E.B. Du Bois’s 1952 autobiographical text, *In Battle for Peace: The Story of my 83rd Birthday*. Du Bois, the co-founder of the NAACP in 1909 and certainly one of the most influential (African) American intellectuals of the twentieth century, became a target of McCarthyite anticommunist repression when he was indicted in 1950 in compliance with the Foreign Agents Registration Act from 1938 for founding the “Peace Information Center,” a center distributing literature on peace and nuclear disarmament. Two years later, Du Bois published *In Battle for Peace*, dealing extensively with his stigmatization and his 1951 trial. Although Du Bois’s ‘later life’ (meaning here, broadly speaking, the period after 1930 when he ‘turned’ more and more leftwards and eventually joined the CPUSA, the Communist Party of the United States, in 1961) as well as his stigmatization during McCarthyism have been the subject of extensive research in recent historiography and literary studies, Du Bois’s *In Battle for Peace* received only little attention up to date and must still be regarded as one of the most “obscure” and “neglected” texts of the African American intellectual’s substantial oeuvre (Manning Marable). Taking up this lacuna, I will delineate how the genre of ‘life writing’ functions as an important site of resistance to McCarthyism in respective text, arguing that the text’s strategic recurrence on an African American autobiographical tradition (‘The Story of My 83rd Birthday’) explicitly counters and protests the stigmatization of ‘redness’ and ‘Un-Americaness’ and is thus of crucial importance to the defense of the self. I will outline some narrative strategies which function to counter and re-write the McCarthyite stigmatization of Du Bois as an ‘Un-American’ subject, among them issues of intertextuality, discourses of ‘Americanism’ and, connected to this, a self-fashioning of Du Bois as the ‘Ultimate American.’ In a second step of this lecture, I will shortly outline my PhD project in a broader way, focusing on my primary source material, the current outline and structure of the project.
“Only Stones and Stories Remain”: Greek American Travel Writing about Greece

When, after a very long journey, author Daphne Athas finally arrives in Athens, her reaction is ecstatic: “We turn into the suburbs. Donkeys pass. The houses are made of adobe. Greek men at the kaphenia look up from their coffee as the train passes. They wave to us. We wave back. We shout: ‘We are in Athena! We are in Athena!’”[1] Greece By Prejudice (1962), Daphne Athas’s personal narrative about her journey through Greece might seem ‘just’ another travel account, following the tradition of U.S.-American travel writing about Europe. The context of this journey is much more complex than this though. Athas is a second-generation Greek American author traveling to Greece to visit her father’s birthplace Hora and explore her so-called ancestral homeland. She is therefore more than a traveler; she is a returnee.

Since the early 1960s, numerous Greek American authors of the second and third generation have published personal accounts on their travels to Greece. In this paper, I want to argue that these authors take in a double perspective, being both ‘visitors’ and ‘locals’ who are affiliated with both the ‘here’ and ‘there.’ Returnees often experience a feeling of belatedness when arriving in their ancestral homeland. They overcome this feeling by inscribing themselves into the foreign, but—paradoxically—familiar past and making a contribution to the Greek diaspora. Although the intersections of travel writing and return writing are strong, I claim that return writing has to be defined as an distinct (sub)genre of both diaspora writing and travel writing.


Contextualization

Generally, my research deals with the Greek diaspora, specifically with narratives of return written by second- and third-generation Greek American authors. With this project, I react to the recent paradigm shift of the term “diaspora” by looking at the contribution of literature to this discussion. I argue that return is not only exemplary of a diasporic condition or identity, I also claim that return narratives have to be understood as a distinct (sub)genre of diaspora and travel writing. This presentation introduces the parameters of this genre and discusses intersections and distinctions between travel and return writing.

Keywords

Diaspora; Travel Writing; Return; Memoir; Home
Bibliography


Christian Knirsch

**British Romanticism vs. American Transcendentalism: The ‘Romantic Veil’ in Radcliffe and Hawthorne**

When it comes to the epistemological basis of both British Romanticism and American Transcendentalism, a traditional approach would certainly refer to Immanuel Kant's transcendental philosophy which is commonly considered an antipole to John Locke's empiricist Enlightenment philosophy embracing the so-called “veil of perception doctrines” (Rogers 210). This still widely held position is a consequence of the open disdain Locke's philosophy was met with by the large majority of romantic and transcendentalist writers and theorists themselves, among them Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Ralph Waldo Emerson, or Frederic Henry Hedge.

Towards the end of the twentieth century, however, a new trend in philosophical research evolved which reads Kantian idealism and transcendentalism as a “continuation” of (Waxman 5) or an “addition” to (12) British Empiricism rather than a refutation of Locke's epistemological theory. Transcendental philosophy, it is argued, simply “extended Lockean methods of inquiry to non-
Lockean subject matter” (Brantley 22). Consequently, both British Romanticism and American Transcendentalism with their supposed reliance on Kant need to be reassessed with a special emphasis on the contingencies between Lockean empiricism and Romantic literature on both sides of the Atlantic.

This is not to say that British Romanticism and American Transcendentalism are identical or absolute equivalents. A comparison between the poetry and the prose of the Romantic period in Britain itself reveals striking differences – especially in the respective epistemologies and the related conceptions of the sublime: Wordsworth and Coleridge clearly draw on Kant, whereas most Gothic novels are still largely indebted to the Burkean notion of the sublime developed from Locke's concept of perception. The American transcendentalists, in turn, are generally considered to stand in the aesthetic and epistemological tradition of Wordsworth and Coleridge, having exchanged Locke's strict empiricism for a perception of “higher [i.e. spiritual and divine] laws” (Emerson 47).

Based on the latest philosophical research, I will argue that this transcendentalist concept of perception and knowledge is essentially an extension of Locke's epistemology to the realm of the spiritual and metaphysical. In a first step, the poetic perception idolized by Emerson corresponds to the empiric concept of perception. In a second step, however, poetic perception transcends the materiality of the objective world and entails the perception of a higher “Truth” (Emerson 57). For both the ordinary man and the poet, the veil of perception does not cease to exist – yet, the poet is able to see through this veil.

Both the differences and the contingencies between the two epistemologies are exemplified in Ann Radcliffe's Gothic Novels and Hawthorne's short-story “The Minister's Black Veil.”

**Contextualization**

Ever since the Enlightenment, Western philosophy has been dominated by the ocularcentric presumption that seeing equals knowing. Originally, the idea of Cartesian perspectivalism prevailed: vision was considered to be potentially disembodied, objective, monocular, and ahistorical.

The significance of the veil as both a visual and an epistemological metaphor in this context is fairly obvious. If seeing equals knowing, the veil is not only a symbol of mediated vision but also a symbol of reality conceptions. My initial hypothesis now is that the depiction of the veil in literary texts varies in accordance with changes in the respective contemporary conceptions of reality which, in turn, are a result of a mutual exchange between the natural sciences and the humanities.

The thoughts on the veil in Romanticism and Transcendentalism delivered here are taken from the first theoretical chapter on the development of the reality conceptions in the individual epochs. This chapter is followed by considerations on the positivist reality conception in the age of realism which presupposes a hierarchy of veiling; the individual, temporary, and situative theory of perception prevalent in the age of modernism with its floating veils; and, finally, the constructivist and ultimately solipsistic assumption of a completely opaque veil in postmodernism.

**Keywords**
The Veil; Epistemology; Literary History; Literary Theory; Relation between the Humanities and the Natural Sciences

**Bibliography**


**Corinna Lenhardt**

“Washington's Troops Skinned Dead Indians from the Waist Down and Made Leggings from the Skins”: Reiterating Villainy in Native American Gothic Fiction.

Gothic fiction lives and breathes villainy. Without its murderous villains, there would be no Gothic fiction. And from the start, this villainy has been depicted in terms of monstrous savagery. In 1764, Horace Walpole, the presumed founding father of the Gothic literary genre, introduced the soon to
be prototypic “savage, inhuman monster” in England and triggered an onslaught of savage villainy throughout Europe. Riding the high tide of literary fashion, Gothic’s savage villain even traveled across the ocean and to the shores of the New World, where the maze of natural wilderness and human struggle soon proved to be his perfect environment. In early American Gothic fiction, the prototypic savage villain became blended with the terrors of the all-enclosing wilderness, and with the contemporaneous personification of horrific wildness: the Native American savage. Gothic villains were no longer characterized by behaving savagely, but were morphed into full-fledged, snarling and roaring savages.

However, the Gothic villain cannot be dismissed as being one instance of a racially overdrawn “othering” of presumed dangerously deviant minorities. Indeed, while the savage villain set out to captivate mainstream American literature, those minorities depicted as savages set out themselves to renegotiate and rewrite the racialized villain by employing Gothic writing strategies.

Until today, savagery remains the key characteristic of the (American) Gothic villain. The paper will pinpoint different strategies of renegotiation employed to rewrite villainy in contemporary Native American Gothic fiction. Drawing on historical sources and on most recent developments, the underlying, discourse altering effects of this truly revolutionary literary form will be analyzed and contextualized from a postcolonial perspective. However, the paper will refrain from classifying Native American Gothic fiction as postcolonial literature. The one thing the presence of all American Gothic villains make hauntingly clear is that colonialism still exists in the Americas today.

**Contextualization**

My presentation is part of my Ph.D. research project, currently titled *Wild Horror: Reiterating the American Gothic for the 21st Century*. In my project, I focus on defining and employing a postcolonial, neo-modern notion of the Gothic in the context of contemporary Native American and African American fiction. My PGF paper will summarize key definitions and concepts, while pinpointing the central character of American Gothic fiction, the Savage Villain, in two recent Native American Gothic novels [i.e. in Michael Baggett’s *Soapstone* (2004) and Aaron Albert Carr’s *Eye Killers* (1995)].

**Keywords**

Gothic Studies; Savagery; Post/Colonialism; Native American and African American Literature
Bibliography


Leopold Lippert

The Ghost of America: Performing Americanness in a Globalized World

In recent years, *transnationalism* has become a key issue in the debates surrounding the reconceptualization of American Studies. The “transnational turn” has been encouraged by the gradual realization that scholarship in the field must consider “the inside and outside, domestic and foreign, national and international, as interpenetrating,” as Shelley Fisher Fishkin put it in her 2004 presidential address to the ASA. While the increased focus on processes of transfer and globalization has stimulated much research recently, there is still a curious adherence to the “national” as an original frame of reference. Thinking about global dynamics, scholars still assign a certain agency to “national” characteristics, ideas, or values.

My project adopts a different starting point: What if we ceased to consider “nations”, or “national identities,” as original, seemingly naturalized entities that then enter into a transnational dialogue, but rather see them as performative effects of that very interaction? Or to make it more concrete: What would happen if “Americanness” were always already contingent on its global performativity? Would “America” still carry the analytical currency that sustains the discipline? Or would it merely linger in the background of our critical consciousness, a ghost-like presence, strangely haunting our study of what are essentially global cultural processes?

My exemplary reading of several concert performances during the summer of 2010 in Vienna by the Austrian singer/entertainer Waterloo illustrates one such manifestation of haunted Americanness. Born Hans Kreuzmayr in a small Upper Austrian town, Waterloo made his career performing as Native American chief, and has been acting out a phantasmatic (and politically
irritating) Americanness in the process. As my analysis will show, Waterloo’s playing Indian cannot be conceived of through national epistemologies; it is neither American nor Austrian, but a global performance, a deterriorialized drama haunted by the ghost of America.

**Contextualization**

The paper is part of my dissertation project, which is tentatively entitled “Performing America Abroad: How Americanness Is Acted Out on Austrian Cultural Stages”. The larger research project is an attempt to come to terms with the ongoing pervasiveness of a “national” concept like “America,” which, despite our concern for post-national, or trans-national phenomena, still holds enormous critical currency. My study of “Americanness” in “Austria” is intended highlight the incoherencies and improbabilities of a nation-based, disciplinary approach to what are more appropriately thought of as hybrid and deterriorialized processes. As a methodological apparatus as well as an object of study, performance provides a critical reference point for the construction of transnational genealogies that venture beyond the nation-frame and steer away from the mythologizing of seemingly “national” characteristics or origins.

**Keywords**

Transnational; Performance; Globalization; American Studies Theory; Indianness

**Bibliography**


World Constructions in the Post-Apocalyptic Novel

The last decade has been a prolific and fruitful one for post-apocalyptic novels. They confront the reader with a variety of settings and worlds, from the bleak and dead remnants of an unviable earth in Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road* and the thriving but depopulated shores of Margaret Atwood’s *Oryx and Crake*, to the bizarrely changed Moscow cityscape of Tatyana Tolstaya's *The Slynx*, the hazardous American South of James Braziel's *Snakeskin Road*, the neo-feudalistic United States of Robert Charles Wilson's *Julian Comstock* and the (brave) new world of Bernard Beckett's *Genesis*’ re-imagined New Zealand.

What these worlds and the societies that populate them share, is that all of them are simultaneously radically alien and conventionally familiar, and this is in part due to their use of a mixture of restructured (but recognizable) natural landscapes and the symbols of fallen civilizations that are littered throughout these self-same post-disaster landscapes (the buried Statue of Liberty in the wilderness in *Planet of the Apes* (Dir. F. Schaffner, 1968) being but one of the most vivid examples).

The sheer physical shape of the different post-apocalyptic worlds is one of the most significant factors determining the kind of stories that can be told in them, by limiting the amount (and kind) of world that is actually available to the characters, and by defining the relationships possible between the characters and their environment. These profoundly significant acts of world-building, along with the ways in which remnants of the pre-disaster world are being integrated into these new landscapes and how they are being dealt with by the new, isochronal societies are the aspects of post-apocalyptic fictions that form the centre of my PhD thesis, and consequently a synopsis of my findings will form the basis of my presentation at the PGF.

Contextualization

The working title of my PhD thesis is "In Civilizations' Ruins: World and Society Structures in the Post-Apocalypse," and consequently my thesis deals with an analysis of world constructions in recent post-apocalyptic novels, with a focus on the different levels on which world building can occur within said novels, and on what role the nature of the catastrophe and the corresponding remaining physical world play for the limits and boundaries of said world construction efforts.
Keywords
Ecocriticism; Narrative Situations; Post-Apocalypse; Ruin Theory; World Construction

Bibliography

Anne Overbeck

*Mothering the Race: The Discourse on Welfare and Reproductive Rights of African American Women in the Twentieth Century*

From the very beginning reproductive rights and thereby motherhood of African American women have been subject to interference from the outside and a matter of public debate. During the time of slavery African American women were seen as commodities of value also and especially because of their ability to reproduce. Slave owners interference into family matters were a common phenomenon. The public interest in the inner workings of the African American family did not end with slavery, but has continued until today.

Central to these discussions was the fact that a high percentage of African American children were brought up in single parent households. The explanations for this discrepancy were manifold and changed significantly over the course of the 20th century. The lines of argument ranged from single parenthood being the result of the African cultural heritage, or a sign of biological inferiority, to being caused by the disruptive life during the 300 years of slavery. These different explanations had one thing in common: a deeply negative presentation of the African American family and the mothers within these families as such. Exemplified by the debates surrounding the founding of the Harlem Clinic in 1924, a clinic offering family planning services to the black community, the disputes about sterilization regulations for women on welfare in the 1950s and 1960s, and the so
called ‘Crack Baby’ debate in the 1980s - the aim of the paper will be to show how throughout the 20th century discursive concepts of race and class intersected to create and sustain a deeply negative image of African American motherhood and to justify state interference in the reproductive rights of black women.

**Contextualization**

**Keywords**

Gender Studies; History of the Welfare State; Race and Reproductive Rights; African American History; Discourse Analysis

**Bibliography**


**Jesper Reddig**

**The Russian Jewish Female Voice Re-Visited: Shifting Homes in Petropolis, US**

The aim of my paper is twofold. On the one hand, I implicitly substantiate the recent claim that two decades after the fall of the Iron Curtain, a cultural studies forum is still missing which does justice to the intricate and mutual forms of impact between the former Cold War antagonists. On the other hand, I exemplarily outline my direct field of research, which focuses on the contemporary group of post-Soviet Jewish migrant writers in the U.S.: while they are vitally discussed in the current public debate, related systematic scholarship has been astonishingly reluctant.

In the first, methodological part, I will draw on a poly-cultural background that includes American, Jewish, and Eastern European studies; I’d like to test whether the motif of home, and its
complex resonances, qualifies as a cohesive organizing trope and analytical category. After discussing the postcolonial approach to dislocation as subversive hybridity, I will connect this abstract term with Svetlana Boym’s more pragmatic dialectics of “home” and “nostalgia.” Exploring the creative, oft-ironic strategies of impossible homecoming (“reflective nostalgia”), but also the traditionalist, oft-reactionary attempts at reconstructing the lost home (“restorative nostalgia”), Boym’s account is highly flexible. While she shares in the anti-essentialist agenda of postcolonialism, she re-focuses on migrants’ local, casual, and quotidian adaptation strategies, thus complementing universalist celebrations of global mobility in literary studies.

In the second, analytical part, I will provide a reading of Anya Ulinich’s satiric debut novel, *Petropolis* (2007), and show how the author adds a fresh element to both the field of migrant fiction and the established Jewish American cultural canon. Ulinich relates how her biracial protagonist, mail-order bride Sasha in search of her father, embarks on an erratic journey from a Siberian exogulag via the American West to the East coast. The novel’s very title, referring to a profound Russian tradition, indicates a mythic quest for home: However, if Sasha ultimately finds and abandons her irresponsible father, this strips the narrative off any utopian character. At the same time, it neither falls into the trap of merely reversing the structure and proposing just another, dystopian teleology. Rather, Ulinich playfully references a host of American and Russian grand narratives that extend from the tale of Jewish opportunity in the U.S. to the ethnic *topos* of victimization, and from the tradition of Soviet racism to the idealization of the exotic Black Russian. Sasha’s picaresque survival strategies in shifting environments enact an original and subtle aesthetics of the practices of everyday life, which both suggests a flexible form of self-realization and refutes closure as a means of bringing the plot back home.

**Contextualization**

Interested in American migrant literature as well as Jewish studies, I consider a transnational approach, which involves the ruptured and extremely heterogeneous melting pot of Eastern Europe, as an inspiring and challenging task. Structurally, I am thoroughly informed by literary scholar Sladja Blazan, who has recently suggested implementing a multidimensional field of post-socialist studies in American studies departments. As of late 2010, I am in the rather early stages of my dissertation project, an in-depth analysis and typology of post-Soviet Jewish American fiction.

In terms of literary analysis, I benefit from Linda Hutcheon’s powerful theory of postmodern narrative as being fundamentally concerned with the history of representation, and thus by extension, with the history of exclusion. Moreover, I base my approach, on the concept of
Funktionsgeschichte (Winfried Fluck), which theorizes aesthetic structures as dialectically enabled by, and enabling, social structures. I am hence constantly reading the primary texts side by side with other socio-cultural phenomena, and try to trace dialogues that exceed conventional text-immanent interpretations. Research up to now has led me to an exploration of a variety of popular and academic discourses, such as the debate on Jewish Whiteness, the highly internet-affine “New Jew” subculture, or the multiracial movement. Drawing heavily on ethnic studies scholar Paul Spickard’s outline of American history as a perpetual attempt at enforcing normative Whiteness, my first genuine research result was an account of the writing in focus as a meta-fictional form of re-writing the Russian American bildungsroman from the early twentieth century, and the entailed systemic power binds. In the present analysis, I at once exemplify, consolidate, and expand this view.

**Keywords**

Postmodern Fiction; Jewish American Studies; Post-Socialist Studies; Transmigration; Whiteness and Multiraciality

**Bibliography**


**Andreza André da Rocha**

**Brazil Made in the USA: Stereotypical Representations of Developing Countries in the Context of Media Concentration and Hegemonic Power**

Sensual women, superstitious rituals, exuberant nature, poverty and violence. The portrayal of Brazil by American mainstream cinema brings the same stereotypes to the big screen over and over again, ignoring the cultural, ethnic and social diversity of the world’s fifth largest nation. Films and
other texts of popular culture made in Brazil represent this diversity more accurately, but only a few manage to trespass the barrier of America’s global cultural supremacy and reach international audiences. The massive and constant introduction of American cultural goods in the global media market generates an illusion of diversity, when in fact the same discourses are recycled, repacked and sold as novelties. In this context, alternative discourses produced by cultural industries with less prestige and financial power remain restricted to national markets. This is especially critical regarding the representation of developing countries by American mainstream media, which is traditionally based on an ethnocentric regime of representation. In mainstream discourses produced in the United States, developing countries like Brazil are generally characterized by lawlessness and immorality, ideal territories for the development and glorification of American characters. An analysis of the portrayal of Brazilian culture and society in American mainstream films from the last 30 years shows how media concentration contributes to the perpetuation of cultural and ethnic stereotypes that reinforce colonialist and reductionist ideas about developing countries. Moreover, it indicates the need to revive the debate about a New World Information and Communication Order, which emerged within UNESCO in the 1970s, in order to identify viable solutions for a more balanced and diverse global media scenario.

**Contextualization**

The presentation focuses on the main outcomes of the first chapter of my doctoral thesis. Based on the analysis of 13 mainstream American films set in Brazil or with Brazilian characters, I was able to identify the general discourse of the US-based film industry about Brazil and to list the main characteristics attributed to each country in the films. In the presentation I will summarize the most important findings of this stage of my research and discuss them in the context of media concentration, referring to data on media concentration and quotes from critics of American cultural imperialism such as Schiller and Chomsky. This will provide a glimpse into the totality of my project, which is composed by four main parts: film analysis; stereotyping (the social function of stereotypes, cultural and ethnic stereotypes, ethnocentrism, stereotypes in popular culture); media concentration (the global domination of the American media industries and its effects on cultural diversity); and UNESCO’s debate about the establishment of a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO). In the last chapter I discuss the reasons that led to the failure of UNESCO’s efforts in the 1970s and early 1880s to balance the global communication flows, the organisation’s conflicts with the United States and lessons from the MacBride Report “Many Voices One World” (1980) that are worth being re-introduced into the public debate about media
concentration today. The thesis defends the hypothesis that media concentration contributes to the dissemination and perpetuation of stereotypes and prejudices, as well as to a decrease in the world’s cultural diversity. For this reason, strategies for a more balanced global media scenario must be sought in an international level.

**Keywords**
Cinema; Media Concentration; Ethnocentrism; Cultural Imperialism; Cultural Diversity.

**Bibliography**

**Alexandra Schein**

**A Spiritual Homecoming: Ireland in Contemporary Movies about Irish Americans**
The focus of this talk lies on representations of journeys to Ireland in contemporary movies that feature Irish Americans. The texts under discussion are: Leap Year (Anand Tucker, 2010), P.S. I Love You (Richard LaGravenese, 2007), The Matchmaker (Mark Joffe, 1997) and This is my Father (Paul Quinn, 1999).

These movies reflect distinct approaches to Ireland and 'roots' tourism and the journeys thus fulfill various functions in the plots, bearing different implications for the characters' ethnic identity. The two main themes in the texts are genealogical quests and mating. Interestingly, recent movies like Leap Year, P.S. I Love You, and, to some extent, The Matchmaker, take up on the familiar trope of finding 'true' love in Ireland. Ireland often functions as a secluded space, helping the protagonists to reevaluate their goals and to open up towards romantic love in a way that their prior lives in the US seem not to have allowed. The conversion from self-assured and determined females to devoted partners is especially interesting since, in contrast to earlier takes on the theme, the movies depict female instead of male protagonists. The Matchmaker and This is my Father deal with Ireland more
critically and openly address the issues of searching and performing identities. The plots revolve around searches for roots – although fueled by very different motivations. The emotional implications of the journey to Ireland here are not founded on the establishment of new relationships, but the reanimation of old ones and the filling of a perceived lack in the characters' social identities.

In all the texts, contemporary Ireland is negotiated with diaspora expectations and imaginations. Furthermore, the special relationship between Ireland and the US is repeatedly brought up. Stereotypes are permanently exposed and challenged, but on a more abstract level, the image of Ireland as an almost liberating and enchanting place is mostly reaffirmed. Its beautiful scenery and relaxed and charming people function as a retreat from the American city and its daily strife and (post-)modern vexations.

The trip to Ireland thus changes the characters and their lives profoundly. Ireland enables: the journey affords couples, enlightens the characters about their goals and values, brings families closer together and mends broken relationships and sorrows. Skepticism turns into faith and materialism into honesty and loyalty. Even the movies that take into account some of Ireland's modern-day problems and its difficult past partly tap into this image. Thus, a powerful relationship between dominant discourses in American movies, Irish American identity and motives for ethnic identification becomes evident.

**Contextualization**

The unabated success of Irish and especially Irish American-themed films and TV shows draws attention to the attractiveness of Irish American ethnicity in the media. As several authors suggest, Irish American ethnicity bears interesting opportunities for identification and serves as a 'discursive platform' for many current social issues.

In my dissertation project I am examining representations of Irish Americans in contemporary wide and small screen productions. The perspectives presented run the gamut from using Irishness as a proxy for conservative hypocrisy and social problems to pinpointing its expediency as a cultural credential in a multicultural country. The movies and TV shows under scrutiny constitute a part in a wider framework of discourses on ethnicity in modern day America as they are constantly negotiating matters of ethnic identity and issues connected to it. As narratives they contribute to the sustaining and the performance of identities and are themselves examples if such performances. The analysis can thus yield interesting insights into these identification processes and discourses.
Within this project, the analysis of texts dealing with Ireland takes an important place since images of the homeland play an essential role for Irish Americans' memory and identity. The movies show that the journey 'home' is rewarded with spiritual renewal and a better understanding of oneself. The negotiation of modern Ireland with diasporic memory and the image of Ireland in contemporary popular culture also inform the movie narratives. The analysis of representations of Irish Americans' journeys to Ireland can thus elucidate important aspects of Irish American ethnic identity and its performance.

**Keywords**

Irish Americans; Movies; Ireland; Ethnic Identity; Roots Tourism

**Bibliography:**


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**Silke Schmidt**

**(Re-)Framing the Arab as Political Project: Scholarly Agency in the Life Writing of Edward Said and Leila Ahmed**

Arab American writing has undergone an enormous expansion during the past three decades. Especially the genre of autobiography has emerged as a dominant means for Arab Americans to negotiate their identities. In addition to gaining a voice in the literary field, Arab Americans have also become more visible due to their involuntary media presence. Foreign political conflicts in the Middle East and the advent of international terrorism in the wake of 9/11 have fostered stereotypical images of Arabs in the public eye. Recent analyses of Arab American life writing mostly approach these works from the perspective of postcolonial studies which interpret life writing as self-
constituting practice in the context of public discourse. What remains largely unexplored, however, are the actual mechanisms shaping contemporary discourse in the mass media age.

The present paper, which is part of an ongoing dissertation project, seeks to establish the missing interdisciplinary link between autobiography and media studies. By drawing on the communication theory of framing, it explores how Arab American authors reconstruct and write their lives within a network of overlapping interpretative frameworks established by the mass media. Framing here is defined as the process of selecting aspects of perceived reality to make them more salient and to promote a particular causal interpretation and/or moral evaluation. Frames can be identified according to different analytical levels and categories. With respect to the analysis of Arab American autobiographies, the political frame is of crucial importance. On the one hand, autobiography here serves as a means to counter collective images of Arab identity. On the other hand, autobiographic agency is constrained by the dominance of existing media frames. This interactive process of establishing new frames while at the same time consciously or unconsciously reiterating existing mechanisms of interpretation in the form of mediated memories is referred to as (re-)framing.

The interdisciplinary transfer of media theory to the analysis of autobiographies is based on the finding that life writing and news media content share common structural characteristics. Both are the product of selective and constructive mechanisms. At the same time, the audience nevertheless ascribes a high degree of authenticity and objectivity to these formats. The influence of autobiographies on public discourse can therefore be compared to the one exerted by other mass media content. This especially holds true for the sub-genre of academic life writing. Authors here gain additional credibility based on their intellectual authority as scholars. From the perspective of communication theory, they therefore represent opinion leaders who play a privileged role in the shaping of public perceptions of Arab identity by linking their personal and academic insights.

Evidence for the trajectories of the integrated framing model is provided by a close-reading analysis of the life writings by Edward Said and Leila Ahmed. Both authors situate their life narratives in an explicitly political context. What is most important with respect to the techniques they use to counter common perceptions of Arab identity is the blending of intellectual expertise with political awareness. Edward Said in his memoir *Out of Place* (1999) links his academic career path to the experience of exile in the West, which equips him with the necessary knowledge and analytical distance to reflect on political events in the Middle East. His personal, academic and political personae are thus inherently linked. A similar finding emerges from the analysis of Leila
Ahmed’s memoir *A Border Passage* (1999). Ahmed also frames her narrative as political and historical inquiry in which her academic development in Europe is presented as the basis of her political awakening. While Said’s political focus rests on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Ahmed directs her attention to the question of Arab womanhood and feminist identity politics.

The results of the analysis underscore the meaning of framing as instrument of political agency and mobilization. The fact that both works also represent examples of academic autobiographies in addition highlights the mechanisms used to complement authorial agency with intellectual authority. *Out of Place* and *A Border Passage* therefore constitute hybrid narratives acting at the border between personal and scholarly writing. Consequently, they occupy a special position in the landscape of mediatized memory reconstruction. This finding however also points to the problems arising out of framing as authorial strategy. The very entanglement of academic identity and political agency, in other words, the relation between knowledge and power, constitutes a core pillar of Orientalist discourse. The fact that both authors nevertheless employ this strategy while also succumbing to the vocabulary of binary discourse between East and West emphasizes the lasting impact of existing media frames on authorial agency. Efforts to oppose these universal binaries with more complex depictions of Arab identity as derived from personal experience thus evolve into a vicious circle in which media framing and authorial reframing constantly alternate.

Due to its interdisciplinary theoretical approach and methodology, *Reclaiming Jazz: Liberation and Rebellion in African American Jazz Poetry and Fiction from the 1920s to the 1970s* opens up novel research paths to the study of multi-ethnic academic life writing in general and to a deeper understanding of Arab American identity negotiation in particular. Above all, the analysis demonstrates the meaning of life writing outside the realm of literary studies and explores its broader potential in the context of public media discourse.

**Andrea Schubert**

**Reclaiming Jazz: Liberation and Rebellion in African American Jazz Poetry and Fiction from the 1920s to the 1970s**

Since its emergence around the beginning of the 20th century jazz and blues have opened new dimensions not only to music but also to literary writing as well as to larger racial, social, cultural and historical discourses.

Evolving from selected aspects of my dissertation on “Jazz and Blues in African American Literature from the 1920s to Today,” this presentation will focus on the employment and

While approaching and incorporating the music in quite different ways and manners, the selected texts share a profound understanding and advocacy of jazz and blues as an expression of African American collective memory, historical experience and cultural distinctiveness. Moreover, the writers under discussion, similar to their musical inspirers, criticize that jazz - a music created and innovated mainly by African Americans - has repeatedly been imitated, appropriated and commercialized by white society. Their texts are thus rooted in an attempt to reclaim jazz as a cultural medium and art form that records, conveys and negotiates the difficulties of being Black in the United States.

A comparative discussion of literary writings ranging from the emotional and colorful jazz poems and novels during the Harlem Renaissance to the outspoken and insurgent jazz poems during the Black Arts Movement, will go along with an exploration of both continuity and change, particularly with regard to content and form, and atmosphere and tone. Viewed within the underlying racial, sociocultural and historical contexts, the employment and reclamation of jazz in African American literature, especially between the 1920s and 70s, reflect major discourses of African American identity and interestingly also an increasing move from the mere strive for equality and freedom towards radical liberation, rebellion and separatism.

**Contextualization**

This presentation has evolved from a chapter in progress that will be included into the main part of my dissertation on “Jazz and Blues in African American Literature from the 1920s to Today.” My larger research project builds on the argument that jazz and blues, as the most significant forms of musical expression of African American culture, have provided a model for many African American writers. Mainstream white American culture has repeatedly co-opted African American musical styles. African American musicians have thus been challenged to retake popular forms and reconfigure them. In this respect, a number of innovative jazz styles can be understood as a response to white imitation, misappropriation and commercialization of jazz as well as an attempt to reclaim a music deeply rooted in African American culture. African American writers have tied on to these contexts with the same stylistic and thematic mastery as their musical inspirers. My
dissertation then attempts to identify and analyze why and how these authors have employed and represented jazz and blues in their works.

This presentation will restrict itself to a discussion of selected texts from the 1920s to the 1970s. I have recognized this period as particularly significant and productive in terms of artistic innovation and with regard to the reclamation of jazz. The comparison of the selected texts has given new impetus to my larger research project and reinforced one of my more recently considered arguments: Jazz in its African American styles and subject matters as well as the music’s employment and representations in African American literature can be understood as a way of rebellion and liberation - rebellion against white supremacy and racial discrimination, and liberation from any kind of constraints, conventions and hierarchies in society and art.

**Keywords**

African Americans, Jazz and Blues, Collective Memory, Historical Experience, Racial Identity

**Bibliography**


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**Marleen Schulte**

**A Sense of Place: Spatializing New England Through a Critical Regionalist Fiction**

Critical regionalist fiction pullulates from America’s hinterland: Louise Erdrich roots her stories in the Indian reservations of North Dakota; the climate and landscape of Newfoundland serve as the location for Annie Proulx; and Richard Russo writes his stories into the wilderness of Maine. While combing through these un-mapped places of America, critical regionalist fiction detaches itself from
nostalgic and romanticized notions of nineteenth century regionalism. Instead, it fuses global matters from school shootings to dementia and the impact of universal civilization with themes drawn from a particular place.

While this fiction re-maps familiar landscapes of America, the map itself plays only a subordinate role. In fact, critical regionalist fiction draws on a trialectic of space, exploiting shifts not only in physical, but also mental and what the sociologist Henri Lefebvre terms “lived” spaces. Critical regionalist fiction demonstrates how spatial geographies are no longer tied to cartography, but instead expand beyond to include the imagined or conceived, and most importantly, the inhabitant or user, the individual who performs a space and thus brings it to life.

By example of the region of New England, I will explore this trialectic of space and identify the changes these spaces are undergoing as they are re-defining not only the region, but the nation on a whole. For this purpose I will draw on authors such as Cathie Pelletier, Ernest Hebert, Russell Banks, as well as the Pulitzer Prize winners Richard Russo and Elizabeth Strout.

At the turn of the 21st century, critical regionalist authors are re-mapping America, shifting spaces on multiple layers – physically perceived, mentally conceived, and lived – challenging the concept of a bounded geography.

**Contextualization**

**Keywords**

Critical Regionalism; New England; Spaces

**Bibliography**


“American Poverty: Representations in Contemporary Literature, Photography, and Film”

The portrayal of American poverty is subject of heated discussions involving numerous conflicting views. Different media stand out in representing poverty. Photography, film, documentary literature and fiction approach the subject in inherently differing ways. In the past two decades, the field of narrative journalistic writing has gone through an especially remarkable blossoming regarding tales of poverty. In monumental narratives contemporary journalists publish the stories of America’s least fortunate to the world’s reading public. To report these tales of misery, journalists spend long stretches of their lives immersing themselves in the world of those preferably forgotten in sagas about the land of opportunity.

   Adrian Nicole LeBlanc is one of them. She left her secure income behind, to spend her days, and sometimes nights, amidst the daily struggles of a number of intertwined Puerto Rican families in the 1990s Bronx. Without direct personal comments, Random Family – Love, Drugs, Trouble and Coming of Age in the Bronx (2003) puts a face to life on welfare, drug trade and teenage parenthood. For all of those who never have and likewise never would dare to venture out to see for themselves, what it is like to be poor in the wealthiest country of the world, LeBlanc offers detailed accounts of urban suffering. From one perspective, her narrative aims at stirring empathy and in best cases provokes change, if not for her protagonists, at least in her readers’ attitudes.

   Is there more to it though? Publishing intimate details of unfortunate people’s lives clearly brings up a large number of ethical questions to debate. Where does honorable investigation give way to voyeurism? Thoughts and findings related to this question will be discussed and explored in my presentation.

   Contextualization
   Aside from narrative journalism, portraits of American poverty can be found in contemporary photography, film and fiction. The strategies and effects as well as the controversies surrounding these are subject of my research, which aims at a comprehensive picture of contemporary depictions of American poverty. I focus on works depicting urban minority youth, who are especially often in the center of such portraits.

   Keywords
   Urban Poverty, Childhood/Adolescence, Documentary, Fiction, Film
Bibliography


Klara Stephanie Szlezák

Staging American Literary and Cultural Traditions in New England Writers’ Houses

Traveling rural New England, one cannot help but notice the high density of houses that used to belong to and be inhabited by canonical nineteenth-century American writers and that are now open to the public as tourist sites. On closer examination, these houses prove to be particularly complex cultural phenomena located at the intersection of various possible and competing categorizations: claims of “high” culture in the staging of classic literature collide with the demands of tourism and popular/mass culture; the originally domestic spaces, while still being advertised as such, are nowadays public in nature; claims of authenticity need to be reconciled with the essential constructedness of the houses as “stages” today; literature and literary production as the central subject of the museums demand the visualization of an invisible, abstract process; and aspects of the narrative, i.e. of the story/-ies the houses are designed to narrate, coincide with aspects of the performative, i.e. the choreography both tour guides and tourists ritually enact during the visit; clear boundaries between the writers’ fiction and their biographies are blurred in the process of arranging the houses for public display; typically regional features are juxtaposed to and in part re-interpreted as trademarks of a ‘national character’ and tradition. My objective in closely investigating a selection of the houses is to reveal to what extent these houses partook and are partaking in the creation and reinforcement of cultural memory in the U.S. The complexity of these sites not only necessitates to view and to compare the houses from a historic as well as a present-day perspective; it also requires an inherently interdisciplinary approach, reuniting central aspects of Memory
Studies, findings of Literary History and Regional/Local History, Historic Preservation, (Domestic) Architecture, and questions asked in Tourism Studies and Museum Studies. In order to illustrate in which ways the above mentioned issues reveal themselves in the houses as they are presented today, The Orchard House, which is located in Concord, MA, and was the home of the Alcott family in the mid-nineteenth century, will serve as a case study for the presentation.

**Contextualization**

My presentation will aim at tackling some of the central questions that my larger research project is concerned with. In order to provide a concise and more graspable idea of what I am working on I will focus on just one of the many nineteenth-century writers’ houses in New England: The Orchard House, which used to be the home of the Alcott family. Instead of giving a purely chronological overview over the house’s development since the time the Alcotts’ resided there, my major concern will be the factors—historical as well as present-day and conceptual— that turn the house into a complex cultural phenomenon. Many of the dynamics that can be observed in the Orchard House are to be found in many other houses; yet, each house has its own history and particularities, which makes it impossible to draw up a typology and at the same time makes it necessary to examine each house separately and to carefully select the points of comparison. Within the time frame of the forum and with view to the relatively early stage of my research, it seems reasonable to elaborate on one house, which will serve as just one sample to exemplify what issues are at stake in the larger project.

**Keywords**

Literary Pilgrimage; Historic Preservation; Sites of Memory; Heritage Tourism; Authenticity

**Bibliography**


**Claudia Ulbrich**

**On Native American-German Pietist Relations in Eighteenth-Century Pennsylvania**

Across the centuries, different ethnic societies – indigenous as well as Euro-American groups – have shaped and negotiated the contours of the North American landscapes through their interactions. As Clayton and Teute argue, “this process of cross-cultural contacts, conflicts, and convergences was neither inevitable nor did it follow certain static geographic or cultural borders (1998:14). Not limited to a geographical understanding, these groups interacted in a zone of diverse, mutual exchanges with regard to social, political, economic, and religious concepts.

However, academic attention has only recently turned towards the multiple influences of indigenous groups on European settlers. Likewise, the idea of a monolithic “frontier“ has increasingly been substituted by a multi-dimensional space of interaction, introduced by epistemological considerations like Mary Louise Pratt’s seminal essay “Arts of the Contact Zone” (1991) or Richard White’s historical study of a *Middle Ground* (1999) in the Great Lakes region.

My PhD project thus positions itself in the current debate on processes of cross-cultural contact and translation. The focus is directed at relations between German-speaking Pietists and indigenous communities like the Iroquois, Delaware-Lenape, and Shawnee in the area of today’s Pennsylvania from 1740 to 1790. Research questions deal with aspects of exchange, interdependencies, and characteristics of these relations by capturing moments of indigenization in Pietist communities. The project examines the transferal of knowledge on the basis of understanding and incorporating the notion of landscape in religious and cultural practices. In doing so, interfaces appear that render the undertaking as truly interdisciplinary. Different approaches from historical science (e.g. history of entanglement; transatlantic history), anthropology (e.g. ethnohistory), Native American Studies, Gender Studies, Postcolonial Theory (e.g. concepts of hybridity) as well as from Literary Studies are considered and tested as to their applicability for a close examination of primary sources. I am particularly interested in the process of knowledge in motion where landscape and gender is concerned with regard to Indigenous and Pietist communities. Therefore, the main focus is on the ways in which spirituality is derived from the land and the connection of land and gender, marking natural surroundings as gendered space. By contrasting and uncovering the entanglements of gendered spaces in metaphors and stories, the
project intends to explore and describe a landscape that involved a complex pattern of individual borders and the crossings thereof by various actors in the region of today’s Pennsylvania in the second half of the 18th century.

In a nutshell, the project aims at the analysis of cross-cultural exchange and translation processes between indigenous and German-speaking groups with the main focus on the transferal, adaptation, evaluation, and rejection of indigenous knowledge by German Pietists.

**Alexandra Wagner**

“Confusions about the Place and the Way in Which I Grew Up”: Space and the Production of Autobiographical Knowledge in Joan Didion’s Memoir Where I Was From

Yet, California has remained in some way impenetrable to me, a wearying enigma, as it has to many of us who are from there. We worry it, correct and revise it, try and fail to define our relationship to it and its relationship to the rest of the country.

(Didion, Joan. Where I was from. London: Harper Perennial, 2004, 38)

In her 2003 memoir Where I was from Joan Didion speaks not only about herself but also about California. In her text she analyses her own ambiguous relationship to the state in which she was born, but she also speaks at length about California, its history and many different people from California. Didion describes her narrative as an “exploration into my own confusions about the place and the way in which I grew up” (Didion 2004: 18). The place where she grew up plays a very important role in Didion’s text. What effects does that have? Is ‘California’ only the narrated space and the place where Didion made her experiences?

I want to argue that California is much more in Where I was from: Didion unfolds a narrative in which self-knowledge appears to be structured and ordered with the help of spatial categories. Space is the ordering principle, the structuring device for speaking about her own life. Therefore, my general thesis is that life narratives need such ordering principles because knowledge about oneself – autobiographical knowledge – is never unstructured, never only a list of unconnected facts about a life. Autobiographical knowledge is ‘narrated knowledge’ and therefore its elements cohere in one way or another. Didion’s text is an example in which space serves as such an ordering principle for the otherwise loose facts of a life.
Contextualization

Currently I am writing my dissertation with the title *Knowledge in Autobiography*. In my research I am describing the genre-specific strategies and structures that are at work when autobiographical knowledge is constructed. Starting with the assumption that such knowledge – derived from narrating one’s own from experiences – is ‘special knowledge’ because it can be positioned between fact and fiction and is neither pure fact nor absolutely fictitious, I am writing about the functions of the category ‘genre’ in general and the conventions of the autobiographical genre and their representations in US-American autobiographical texts. My main interest lies in the narrative strategies with which autobiographical narrators write about themselves and authorize their stories.

My presentation at the PGF 2010 about space and knowledge in Joan Didion’s *Where I was from* is an exemplary reading of a text in which a narrator uses specific narrative strategies for the representation of experience and the construction of autobiographical knowledge.

In general, my research project – that will be completed in 2011 – can be situated at a threefold intersection of genre theory, narrative theory and recent research in the field of representations of knowledge in literary texts.

**Keywords**

Autobiography; Life Writing; Genre Theory; Narrative Theory; Knowledge

**Bibliography**


