


# ABSTRACTS AND BIOS

## (Alphabetized by Names)

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### “TRAVEL, FAMILY, AND INTERGENERATIONAL CONNECTION IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN DRAMA”

The presentation will explore how contemporary plays such as *The Humans* by Stephen Karam and *4000 Miles* by Amy Herzog use themes of travel to portray family relationships and intergenerational connections. In both plays, travel serves as a catalyst for characters to confront personal and familial issues. In *The Humans*, the Blake family’s Thanksgiving trip to New York City becomes a space for the characters to confront their anxieties, failures, and desires for connection. Similarly, in *4000 Miles*, Leo’s bike trip across the country brings him to his grandmother Vera’s apartment in West Village where the two characters navigate their generational differences and the effects of grief. Through close analysis of these plays, this presentation will argue that travel functions as a metaphor for the characters’ emotional journeys, as well as a physical space where they can confront their personal and familial histories. Furthermore, the presentation will examine how these plays use intergenerational connections to depict the complexities of family relationships. By focusing on the dynamics between grandparents, parents, and children,

the plays challenge traditional notions of American family structures and explore the ways in which family members can find common ground and understanding despite their differences. Through the examination of how contemporary plays use travel to portray intergenerational relations, this presentation aims to enhance our understanding of how theatre can effectively explore themes such as identity, memory, and human connection. By analyzing the ways in which these plays employ travel as both a physical and metaphorical space for emotional journeys, the presentation will highlight the power of theatre to offer insights into the complexities of familial relationships and the shared experiences that shape our lives.

Keywords: travel, intergenerational connections, contemporary American plays, memory

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“‘A LAND OF PHARAOH AND HIS PLAGUES’: JOHN RANDOLPH OF ROANOKE AND MISSION TO RUSSIA”

In the study of history, there is no concept of a time period which can be viewed as too short to be considered to be of any historical influence. As an Ambassador to the Russian Court at St Petersburg, John Randolph of Roanoke (1773-1833) served only a few unhappy months in this capacity, from May 1830 to autumn of 1831. He cannot truly be described as a political game-changer or witness to any particularly significant historical event. Therefore, scholars engaging with Ran-

dolph's biography usually skim over this episode, finding it altogether biographically and politically insignificant. I argue that overlooking Randolph's time in Russia creates a "blind spot" in both the study of his life and the study of American foreign relations in general. After all, mission to the court presided over by tyrannical Nicholas I right in the wake of the suppressed Decembrist Rebellion was no simple matter. As noted by Alexis de Tocqueville, Russia and America stood at the opposite axis of political influence at the time, like two colosses bound to clash any minute. Therefore, dismissing Randolph's time as Ambassador as a comical or irrelevant fragment of his life would be to trivialize the much broader context. This paper, developed from work carried out by the author for a chapter in the "Presidents and Place: America's Favorite Sons" edited collection (Lexington Books 2023), seeks to analyze the role and the challenges faced by John Randolph of Roanoke in his ambassadorial position against the broader historical and cultural context of the time and throw some light on a previously overlooked biographical event.

Keywords: Ambassador; Early Republic; Russia; America; Randolph

*Olga Akroyd is a graduate of University of Kent (American Studies, 2020) where she completed a thesis on Herman Melville and Feodor Dostoevsky's perceptions of individual versus society dilemma. She is currently engaged as an independent researcher under the aegis of GIRES institute and an associate fellow of Royal Historical Society, working on a biographical analysis of John Randolph of Roanoke's life and times.*

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## "GEOGRAPHIES OF TERROR: HOMECOMING AND DISPLACEMENT IN GWOT LITERATURE"

About ten years before the September eleventh attacks, in the opening pages of the autobiographically inspired novel *An Afghanistan Picture Show*, William T. Vollman noted the captivating draw that war has on the protagonist's mind and identified it as the primary reason for his journey to a distant land: "once upon a time there was a Young Man who wanted to be more than he really was. This made him unhappy. He decided to go to Afghanistan and take pictures of the bullets whizzing past his ears." As in this case, war has always been inextricably linked to travel, whether it be an attraction

for young and hopeful reporters, desperate civilians seeking refuge, or soldiers stationed in foreign lands. The last statement is even more true for Americans soldiers, since the last war fought on American soil dates back to the nineteenth century. This paper analyzes some of the recent literature of the War on Terror—such as Elliot Ackerman’s aptly titled memoir *Places and Names* (2019) and Phil Klay’s ironically named novel *Missionaries* (2020)—and explores the spatial dynamics, cultural encounters, and dislocations caused by the series of interrelated conflicts that have characterized the first two decades of the twenty-first century. In doing so, I argue that these narratives unveil, through both formal and plot devices, like the juxtaposition of different toponyms at the beginning of an episode in Ackerman’s memoir or the use of different focalizers (and therefore diverse geographical settings) in fragmented narratives, the global network of power and violence that underlies modern warfare. The characters of these stories are then depicted as nomadic individuals doomed to perpetually look for their metaphorical home, war itself, across the globe, travelling from one warzone to the next and constituting the threads of a web of smaller conflicts that take place simultaneously, in a seemingly never-ending cycle, around the world.

Keywords: war literature, travel, war on terror, contemporary American literature, Elliot Ackerman, Phil Klay

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“‘ON THE ROAD’: METAPHORICAL JOURNEYS IN TRINIDADIAN CARNIVAL MUSIC”

Carnival is a central aspect of national identity in Trinidad and Tobago. As early as the late 1800s, the pre-Lenten celebration

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had become a space for celebration, social contradiction, and cultural mixing. This notion was amplified with the advent of party politics in the 1950s that used the support and promotion of Carnival as a focus of its nation-building political project in the lead-up to independence from Britain in 1962. Virtually all the revelry associated with Carnival occurs outdoors, on the streets of the capital city Port of Spain. In local terminology, this masquerading, music-making, dancing, and drinking all happens “on the road.” In this paper, I discuss two musical examples that poetically evoke the “the road” as a celebration of Carnival revelry but also as a metaphor for love, sex, and cultural mixing. These meanings are deployed in song texts that speak of metaphorical journeys “on the road” that take narrators through the crowds and chaos of Carnival as well as on more metaphorical journeys of romantic love, carnal pleasure, and social harmony. The two primary case studies used in the paper include the 2019 soca tune “The Road” performed by Machel Montano and Ashanti, and the 2015 chutney-soca tune “I Need a Dulahin” performed by Ravi B. The first example features a clever double entendre in which “the road” is personified as a sexual partner, an object of desire who is capable of taking the narrator “around the world.” Meanwhile, the second example, typical of Indian Trinidadian chutney-soca, features rather conservative lyrics that emphasize family values while also engaging with Carnival culture. This is exemplified in the song’s catchy refrain where the narrator repeats his intentions to find a wife (“dulahin”) and take her “on the road for Carnival.” In my analysis of song texts and musical structures, I ultimately conclude that “the road” represents a touchstone of Trinidadian multicultural identity. In a nation that features two large ethnic minorities (African- and Indian-Trinidadians), such evocations of metaphorical journeys “on the road” in part work to ease racial tensions and advocate for an ideal social harmony.

Keywords: Postcolonialism, national identity, music, Caribbean studies, indentureship studies

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dation (Venice, Italy) which supported the production of the feature-length documentary film *Sweet Tassa: Music of the Indian Caribbean Diaspora* (2019). He is editor of the volume *Music, Sound, and Documentary Film in the Global South* (2022) and co-editor of the *Music and Sound in Visual Media series at Lexington Books*. Email: christopherballenge@gmail.com

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## “CROSSING OVER TO EL OTRO LADO AND THE DEFERRED AMERICAN DREAM”

Many Mexicans refer to the US as “El Otro Lado” – the other side, upon which they project their aspirations of prosperity and social mobility. Immigration to the US is propelled by the imagination of the US as a space conducive to free movement, employment, and home ownership. It motivates the arduous spatial movement many immigrants make illegally, with severely limited resources, and in spite of the hard US immigration policies designed to keep them out. Referring to the US as the other side also foreshortens the physical and emotional distance between the two countries. It has a comforting effect on those planning to cross over to the US. It reassures the illegal border-crosser of the proximity to the land of plenty, and that the American Dream is close at hand. Immigrant narratives in the form of memoirs, novels, and journalistic accounts however linger on the contradictions inherent to this cultural imagination of the US, they reflect on the limits of these aspirations for spatial and social mobility. Reyna Grande’s memoir *The Distance Between Us* tells us about her father who leaves his family behind in Mexico to fulfill his dream of home ownership; the family eventually crosses over to the US and ends up in rented apartments in poor immigrant ghettos. In *Enriques Journey* Lourdes’ movement from California to North Carolina is hardly free of choice, she moves because of California’s exorbitant house rents and the steep competition among its immigrant populations vying for the same low paying jobs. Lourdes’ movement is predicated on the job market and on finding networks of sympathetic compatriots. This paper draws on such examples to discuss the forces that determine immigrant mobility, the conditions in which illegal

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immigrants work and live, exclusionary practices that deny or defer their aspirations for home ownership and social mobility.

Keywords: El Otro Lado, spatial mobility, undocumented immigrants, homeownership, social mobility

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## “WILD WEST DREAMS: SIMULACRA AND PERFORMANCE IN KARL MAY’S FICTIONAL TRAVEL NARRATIVES”

The focus of this paper is to argue that Karl May’s fictional travel narratives, specifically his depiction of the American Wild West in the *Winnetou* books, not only succeeded in creating an imaginative world for readers but also functioned as “performative acts” that influenced and shaped Europe’s dominant image of America. May’s depiction of America as a dreamlike construct, rather than a real place, echoes Jean Baudrillard’s notion that there is no “real” America (29). May’s simulation of the Wild West through images, or simulacra, highlights the power of representation in constructing reality. My paper aims to examine how May, the most widely read German author of all time, crafted a compelling universe that aligned with the perspectives and cultural values of his predominantly German and European audience. Furthermore, it will explore the performative dimension of May’s simulation, where he re-enacted the American West as a spectacle in both his writings and his own persona. May’s incorporation of elements of simulation and performance into his narratives helped him become the “first German pop star.” This paper


will show that May's successful creation of a colorful "fantasy bubble" allowed him to persuade his readers that the Wild West depicted in his travel narratives was a genuine portrayal. By examining May's fake travel tales, the power of representation and performance in shaping our understanding of reality will be highlighted. Through a deliberate combination of the "fantastic" and the "real," May's body of work transcends traditional travel writing conventions that categorize places as either home or abroad, rendering the concept of "nation" irrelevant. Unlike conventional travel narratives, May's stories portray destinations as surreal holograms, especially the mythic "Wild West," resulting in a fusion of reality and imagination, and blurring the distinction between fact and fiction.

Keywords: Karl May; American Wild West; Simulation; Power of Representation; Performance

*Stefan L. Brandt is Professor of American Studies at the University of Graz, with a distinguished academic career spanning several decades. In addition to his position at the University of Graz, he has also held research and teaching affiliations with several other institutions, including FU Berlin, University of Siegen, Università Ca' Foscari, University of Toronto, and Harvard University. Brandt has made significant contributions to the field, with his work covering a wide range of topics in American Cultural Studies. He has authored four monographs, most recently *Moveable Designs*, *Liminal Aesthetics*, and *Cultural Production in America since 1772* (Palgrave, 2022), and has co-edited nine anthologies, among them *Ecomasculinities: Negotiating New Forms of Male Gender Identity in U.S. Fiction* (Lexington Books, 2019) and *Electronic Wastelands? Information Management, Cultural Memory, and the Challenges of Digitality* (special issue of *Amlit—American Literatures*, 2023). He is also one of the founding members of the international, peer-reviewed journal *Amlit—American Literatures* ([www.amlit.eu](http://www.amlit.eu)) and the European research network *Digital Studies* (<https://www.eaas.eu/eaas-networks/643-eaas-digital-studies-network>) (together with Frank Mehring and Tatiani Rapatzikou). Brandt is currently working on a book project dealing with the transatlantic origins of U.S. formation literature (*Burgeoning Selves: Transatlantic Dialogue and Early American Bildungsliteratur, 1776–1860*). For further information, see: <https://homepage.uni-graz.at/en/stefan.brandt/>*

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## "COLUMBUS' NOAH'S ARK"

Christopher Columbus has passed down in history as the "discoverer" of America, a feat that indeed was as serendipitous

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as Alexander Fleming's discovery of penicillin, or Albert Hofmann's discovery of the hallucinogenic effects of LSD. Columbus crossed the Atlantic Ocean four times, but it his first voyage the one that has reached a mythical dimension that ranks the Genoese navigator to the likes of Jason or Odysseus, while the subsequent crossings are generally overlooked as mere appendices to the "Great Discovery" (or, rather, the "great invention") of the New World. It is my contention, however, that to all practical purposes, it was his second voyage the one that truly shaped the fate of the Americas, as I hope to prove in this paper. While his first voyage had been a meager three-caravel affair, the second expedition involved seventeen vessels of various sizes and shapes, and some fifteen hundred people, this time with the purpose, not to explore and discover, but to conquer and settle in the new territories. Besides the crew for each of the ships, the massive fleet transported a microcosmic representation of Spanish society in the late 1400s. There were plowmen, miners, masons, carpenters, blacksmiths, and a variety of other hand laborers and artisans, along with seeds and animals of every kind, diverse raw materials, and all the tools and implements necessary for the titanic task ahead. So titanic, in fact, that had these men been aware of what in truth awaited them on the other side of the Atlantic, not one of them would have joined the venture. Like Noah's Ark, the Spanish fleet carried onboard the seminal fauna and flora that would turn the new world into a replica of the European landscape. That is Columbus's most lasting legacy.

Keywords: Columbian voyages, environmental exchange, textualization of the New World

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## “UNCONTROLLABLE COMMUNICATION’: CIRCUIT OF HISTORIES FROM BELOW IN THE ATLANTIC AND THE MEDITERRANEAN”

In 1647 Neapolitan fisherman Masaniello, along with market women, sailors, poor people, and multiethnic crowds, led a revolt against Spanish taxes on fruit. The revolt of Naples is considered the first proletarian uprising in the world. As Peter Lineaugh and Marcus Rediker remind us, although it lasted only ten days, it “turned the world upside down.” The story of the Neapolitan revolt travelled across the Atlantic, inspiring other revolutions from below. The figure of Masaniello became so popular that during the Boston riots against the Stamp Acts of 1765, Governor Thomas Hutchinson cried out to the urban multiethnic mob: “You are so many Masaniellos!” Although many insurrections and slave revolts in the Atlantic were suppressed, their oppositional ideas took shape in music. They reverberated, melting into the air worldwide through the hypnotic bass line of black sounds. As had happened during the “Age of Revolutions” where news of revolts spread across the Atlantic among sailors, fugitive slaves, soldiers and dockworkers, black music became an uncontrollable means of communication. Music has travelled from the Black Atlantic to the Black Mediterranean, resurrecting the story of Masaniello. In 1979 songwriter and blues musician Pino Daniele composed the song “Je so pazz” (I am a madman), where he recounts the return of Masaniello to contemporary Naples. Here, “roots” become “routes” connecting the motley crew, sailors, market women and sex workers who were the primary agents of the revolt in Naples of 1647 to the movement of the unemployed, dockworkers and disenfranchised urban masses in late twentieth-century Naples.

Keywords: Mediterranean; Black Music; Communication from Below; Contemporary Naples

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*Live: Italian American Doo-Wop in Postwar New York*" (Anglistica, 2009); "Blues in the Bay" (with Iain Chambers) in *Neapolitan Postcards*, edited by Goffredo Plastino and Joseph Sciorra (Rowman & Littlefield, 2016); and "Inner City Blues: Blues Legacies and the Roots of 1968" (Review of *International American Studies*, 2019). His current book project is tentatively entitled *Transatlantic Currents: Blues Across the Sea*.

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### "DUAL JOURNEYING: DON DELILLO'S HIGH-CAPITALIST URBAN SCAPE IN *COSMOPOLIS*"

Set in Manhattan in its postmodern capitalist heyday, Don DeLillo's *Cosmopolis* follows the journey of Eric Packer, a young billionaire, as he travels in his limousine across the town to get a haircut. Disrupted by a presidential visit, anti-globalization demonstrations, and a celebrity funeral, this journey takes up almost the whole day. The sluggish limousine, while serving as a vantage point to observe the hectic city, also facilitates Eric's virtual journey around the globe. Equipped with webcams, computers, and the internet, the limo becomes a mobile node to connect Eric with the rest of the world, where he can reap the wealth of others with technological and financial hegemony. The paper argues that while the limo links Eric extensively with others and the rest of the world, it also symbolizes a sense of isolation and exclusion. Eric, empowered by money and technology, can connect with others easily and instantly gain profit from the rest of the world regardless of physical distance or time differences. However, the sense of connection rendered by technological improvements fails to make Eric emotionally anchored. He is constantly haunted by memories of his past, particularly his failed relationships with women. The dichotomy of the limo as both a metaphor for connection and isolation thus reveals a deviated dual traveling experience only made possible by the combined forces of capitalism, technology, and quickened urban living tempos. Intriguing still, Eric's limo highlights what David Harvey has called "time-space compression". Throughout the novel, there is a sense of urgency and speed, and Eric's interactions with different people are superficial and ephemeral as if the narrative is rushing forward, propelled by the forces of the globalized

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city itself. To some extent, Eric is both a perpetrator and victim of this pressurizing globalized rhythm and trend, which signifies a furthered and deepened stage of capitalism. Energized by technology and globalization, it continuously deviates people like Eric Packer further away from their humanness. This has been echoed by DeLillo's highly compressed writing style, with short sentences and fragmented phrases reflecting the high-paced, fragmented nature of contemporary urban life.

Keywords: Dual journeying, *Cosmopolis*

*Dr. Jiaying Cai received her Ph.D. degree from the School of Cultures, Languages, and Area Studies, the University of Nottingham, U.K. Her research focuses on contemporary American literature and culture, contemporary Chinese literature and culture, urban literature, and internet literature, often with a comparative focus. She is now a lecturer at the School of English Studies, at Shanghai International Studies University, China.*

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“THE LAND OF HEATHENS VERSUS THE LAND OF LIBERTY:  
MARK TWAIN’S *INNOCENTS ABROAD*  
AND UBEYDULLAH EFENDİ’S *TRAVELS*”

Mark Twain's (1835–1910) literary travelogue, *Innocents Abroad* (1869), remarks on and/or subverts previously established interpretations of places and objects. Twain's adopted persona allows him to assume the double role of a fool and an intellectual, simultaneously, by deploying a peculiar type of humor. By openly distaining and emphasizing certain aspects of his travel experiences, Twain's narrator seems naïve on one hand, but a savvy social critic on the other. Twain's account of İstanbul (Constantinople) streets, drinking Turkish coffee, and his Turkish bath experience become farcical descriptions of the Ottoman Empire. His choice of words—such as “the rustiest old barn in heathendom”—also confirms his ideological viewpoint of Ottoman lands. Unlike Twain, Ubeydullah Efendi (1858–1937), who travels in the opposite direction, to the United States from the Ottoman Empire, paints a positive picture of American urban life. He spends most of his time at the Chicago World's Fair of 1893, which he describes in detail. One could argue that since the Ottoman Empire was on the cusp of becoming the Turkish Republic, Ubeydullah Efendi's descriptions

of his American voyage were naturally written in a progressive tone. Yet, a closer inspection reveals subtle criticism, as well as an awareness of how others viewed him as an Ottoman gentleman. Thus, his portrayals do not stem from internalized Orientalism; rather, they are the result of informed observations based on his cultural experiences. Both Mark Twain's and Ubeydullah Efendi's journalistic travel accounts to each other's countries cannot be separated from the ideological and rhetorical dimensions of the era's travel writing. This presentation will focus on both narrators' approach and gaze in a comparative manner. While Twain portrays Ottoman lands in a hostile or condescending manner, with descriptors such as "filthy," "brutish," "ignorant," or "unprogressive," Ubeydullah Efendi's accounts are not so one dimensional. Twain's peculiar humor and narrative attitude were obviously influenced by the political events of the time, and his views were tainted by his orientalist approach. Conversely, Ubeydullah Efendi's straightforward depictions, and occasional humor, are connected to his personality and offer a far more realistic portrayal of late nineteenth-century America.

Keywords: Mark Twain, *Innocents Abroad*, Ubeydullah Efendi, Travel Writing

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"IOWA AND BEYOND: BENGALI POETS OF THE 1960S AND THEIR AMERICAN ENCOUNTERS"

Bengali poet Sunil Gangopadhyay was one of the earliest to join the writers' workshop at the University of Iowa in 1963. How did

his year-long stay in America influence his perceptions of American ways of life and art? Answers can be found in a letter he wrote to fellow Bengali writer Sandipan Chattopadhyay in which he recreates a romantically conceived landscape of Iowa, yet he unequivocally admits that there is little that he can relate to the life in Iowa. However, Gangopadhyay admits that he struggles to relate to life in Iowa and expresses weariness of the “Hungry generation’s” desire for Western recognition. Another Bengali poet Sankha Ghosh would undertake a similar programme in 1967–68. He later wrote a memoir of the Iowa Writers’ Workshop titled “Ghumiye Pora Album” (The Sleeping Album). It chronicles among other things how the international group of writers reacted to the onset of the Vietnam War. Another interesting aspect is that Ghosh seemed visibly concerned that poets like the Yugoslavian Mart Ogen were trying to emulate Ginsberg and therefore, losing their identities. What is common between the recollections of these poets of differing temperament was their concern regarding retaining their uniqueness as poets producing Bengali poetry. Both Gangopadhyay and Ghosh interacted with poets from America and various Asian and African countries, exchanged literary and cultural ideas, spent evening engrossed in literary debates, and formed close camaraderie with many of them. What, then, was the impact of the sojourns to Iowa and beyond on the works of these poets? Did these encounters with America provide the authors with a changed perception of America as a cultural space, and to what extent did it differ from contemporary perceptions of America prevalent in the West Bengal. This proposed paper intends to explore the interface of these two Bengali poets of the 1960s with American culture and analyze how they construed America and its cultural and literary influences.

Keywords: Bengali poetry, Indian receptions of America, cultural exchange, transnational travel

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“ A.K. RAMANUJAN’S INSIGHTFUL OBSERVATIONS  
ON VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:  
LOOKING BRIEFLY AT THE DIARY ENTRIES ”

A.K. Ramanujan was a college teacher who travelled extensively in peninsular India, collecting folktales from rural areas. Since he was already on the move, it wasn’t difficult for him to go to the USA when he received the Fulbright Travel-Fellowship and Smith-Mundt Grant in 1959, to continue his studies in linguistics. The voyage he began on 1 July 1959 on the *Strathaird* from Bombay to reach Southampton, followed by another voyage on the SS *Queen Elizabeth* took him to New York on 28 July 1959. He wrote about experiences and observations during this journey in his “Travel Diary, 2 to 27 July 1959, Bombay to New York” [in the anthology *Journeys: A Poet’s Diary* (2018)]. The first-ever travel overseas, to the US, was full of excitement and anxiety for the young man of thirty. This journey was his initiation for his passage to the country he was to inhabit for the rest of his life, as a teacher in the University of Chicago—a transition from the familiar world he knew and loved (his interior landscape, *akam*) to the unfamiliar country which he was to encounter, explore and experience (the world outside his self, the *puram*). The proposed paper shall focus on *Uncollected Poems and Prose* (2001) and *Journeys: A Poet’s Diary* (2018), to explore his observations and experiences of life in the US. These reveal the way in which his inner self met the new cultural space he entered, followed by his expressing through his creative and critical self, the interface and intermingling of the two. Theories which engage with the third space of representation and its relation to the spaces (the ‘inside’ and the ‘outside’ binary) from which it emerges, the cultural logic of late capitalism (Jameson) and culture in a liquid modern world (Bauman) shall be used as analytical tools. Ramanujan’s writings on the geography of America demonstrate his abilities as a minute observer of men and manners, forging a new mode of travel-writing beyond the here and now.

Keywords: *akam*, *puram*, transnational, liquid modern

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"VISUALIZING THE OTHER: MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS OF NINA KHRUSHCHEVA DURING THE KHRUSHCHEV'S STATE VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES IN 1959"

The gender discourse had an important role in the ideological confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union and proved to be an effective weapon of the Cold War. In American imagination, the image of a Soviet woman became an epitome of the other, which both personified the threat of communism and, at the same time, eased domestic anxieties about rigid gender roles in the post-war US. However, the Cold War was not a homogeneous process. The period from the mid-1950s to the early 1960s that is often referred to as the Khrushchev



Thaw, was characterized by attempts of peaceful coexistence between the two superpowers culminating in Khrushchev's visit to the United States in September 1959. Nina P. Khrushcheva, the wife of the first secretary of the Communist Party, became the first high-rank communist woman to tour the United States with an official visit. The American press took this opportunity to humanize the image of a woman from the other side of the iron curtain and, consequently, defuse tensions on the international stage. In this presentation I will analyze media representations of Nina Khrushcheva that appeared in such periodicals as *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Chicago Daily Tribune* and *Los Angeles Times*. I argue that Khrushcheva's visit became a turning point in constructing the image of Soviet femininity, introducing the rhetoric of different but not intimidating womanhood. Soon after September 1959, fragile hopes for peace between the Western and Eastern Blocs were shattered. Nevertheless, Khrushcheva's visit changed popular perception of the Soviet femininity and became a powerful symbol of communist gender normativity in the second half of the twentieth century. The present study will discuss the shift in the Soviet gender stereotypes presented by the American newspapers, and put them into historical context to show how international policies can gain human face in the press.

Keywords: Nina Khrushcheva, 1959 Khrushchev's State Visit, Cold War, gender stereotypes, Soviet femininity

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*matics of Ideological Adaptation,” and “Forward to the Past: Narratives of Violence and Trauma in Jonathan Safran Foer’s Novels.”*

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“NAVIGATING FOREIGN SPACES: SELIN’S JOURNEYS  
IN ELIF BATUMAN’S *THE IDIOT* (2017)”

This paper intends to explore the relationship between space and gender in Elif Batuman’s debut coming-of-age novel *The Idiot* (2017). Set in the 1990s, the novel follows a year in the life of Selin Karadağ, a first-generation Turkish-American woman, who is a freshman studying linguistics at Harvard University. Whilst the first part of the novel is set in the university campus and is characterized by a sequence of loosely connected chronological episodes that see Selin meeting new people and taking different classes, the second part—which starts with the end of the school year—recounts Selin’s journey across Europe, as she travels to Paris, then to Budapest and the Hungarian countryside, and ends up in Turkey, in Antalya, where her Turkish relatives live. Part of the contemporary Turkish American literary tradition (Furlanetto 2017), *The Idiot* does not simply recount the experience of a first-generation migrant who tries to balance two cultural traditions in U.S. territory (Walkowitz 2006, 531); more accurately, I intend to argue that at the center of the novel stands an ‘anti-developmental’ female *Bildungsroman* (Esty 2011, Joannou 2019). Selin’s inability to understand and decode the surrounding world never finds a solution and the relationship between herself and the people around her becomes even more complicated as the plot moves forward. In fact, as Townsend contends, Selin is ‘idiotic’ in the Dostoevskyan sense since she is independent and alien to ‘the traditional structures of “Western philosophy” and the mainstreams of European and North American culture’ (Townsend 2021, 1). Unable to bridge the gap between herself and society, between language and the world, by the end of the novel, she becomes severely depressed, and chooses to give up on her dreams as a writer. By examining the portrayal of space—namely, the campus and elitist academic life (hence,

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America in the eyes of a first-generation immigrant woman), and her unravelling journey across Europe—this paper intends to shed light on the nuanced relationship between female identity/vulnerability and self-discovery in the novel, contributing to deeper understanding of contemporary female *Bildungsroman* narratives.

Keywords: Twenty-first Century American Fiction; Turkish American Literature; Female Bildungsroman; Female Vulnerability; Journey

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#### “FROM THE TRANSIENT TO THE TRANSNATIONAL: SWAMI VIVEKANANDA IN AMERICA AT THE *FIN DE SIÈCLE*”

Travel has fascinated the human community through the centuries, prompted by a wanderlust and an inherent curiosity to encounter and know other landscapes, people and cultures beyond the familiar world of residence. The traveller, unlike an immigrant, remains an itinerant (Fry 2001), a sojourner (Siu 1952) in the chosen land of travel, with a plan to return at the end of a voyage. The traveller knows that the time spent elsewhere—travelling, observing, absorbing, interacting, interpreting—is timebound by the urge/desire to return ‘home’. The experience is, more often than not, enriching and educational, opening the mind and sometimes affecting/altering ingrained perspectives, perceptions and beliefs about the lands, people, cultures s/he encounters. The traveller remains a transient, but the experience s/he gathers, is seldom transient, affecting and influencing a lifetime of memories, actions and activities long after the traveller has returned to the homeland. S/he is a transnational (Vertovec 2009), having crossed political boundaries

beyond the known comfort zone. The traveller's journeys facilitate a transcendence to a global awareness that marks a cosmopolitan (Appiah 2015), who subsequently belongs to the world, comfortable within her/himself beyond the comfort zone of familiarity. These are the considerations that remain relevant in a review of Swami Vivekananda's epoch-changing visit to America in September 1893, when he was on a global mission to address the World Parliament of Religions. He sought to challenge and dismantle the hitherto misrepresented ideas of Hinduism. Vivekananda travelled to America in the fine de siècle to speak about the major religion of his country at a time when 'Hindu' and 'India'/'Indian' were conflated and used as interchangeable terms for the person and all things pertaining to the subcontinent, which he unpacked. This paper will look at the timing of Vivekananda's itinerary and its significance. It will consider reports, speeches, notes and conversations that relate to Vivekananda's American experience to show how the transient left a legacy that contradicts the timebound nature of sojourn, leading to the founding of organizations and institutions that serve as cultural bridges between the West and India in a transnational project that has endured.

Keywords: Vivekananda in America, traveller, transient, transnational

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## “GAZING AT AMERICA AND AMERICANS IN 19TH CENTURY BRITISH TRAVEL WRITING ABOUT THE US”

The first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was a time when the United States became a popular destination for British travelers and, consequently, a popular subject of British travelogues. The writers were interested in the young republic as a laboratory of democracy which, depending on their own political views, could serve for their countrymen as an example to follow or a warning against the dangers of “mob rule.” They focused on different aspects of American society, manners, and history, but also on natural landscapes and cityscapes. My paper will analyze a number of popular travelogues written between the 1820s and 1860s by writers such as Dickens, Harriet Martineau, Frances Kemble, and Frances Trollope with a focus on their descriptions of looking, gazing, and staring. What I am interested in is the representation of their gazing at people: at white Americans and especially at people of color—and how these types of gaze differ from one another. Additionally, another type of gaze present in the texts in question to be discussed is what I would call imaginary gaze: descriptions of sights which the authors did not witness but, using the polemical power of the visual, construct putting themselves in the position of eye witnesses.

Keywords: travel writing; Victorian literature; transatlantic studies; representation studies; gaze

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lar culture, Transcendentalism, travel writing, and Polish poetry. She is a graduate of the Institute of Jewish Studies Paideia in Stockholm as well as a member of the Association for Cultural Studies and Polish Association for American Studies. She is also a published poet and translator working in Polish, English, and Hebrew.

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### “MARGARET FULLER’S ‘BETTINE BRENTANO AND HER FRIEND GÜNDERODE’ (1842): TRANSATLANTIC PERSPECTIVES AND FEMALE FRIENDSHIP”

Margaret Fuller was a renowned American writer, teacher, conversationalist, and journalist: writing for the *New-York Tribune*, she became the first female American war correspondent as she reported from Italy during Giuseppe Mazzini’s revolution. However, Fuller’s passion for European culture started long before she first traveled to Europe in 1846: ten years earlier, she was prevented from sailing to the old continent by the death of her father, which plunged her and the rest of her family into great economic difficulty. Unable to physically travel, she kept reading and writing about European literature and engaged, particularly, with German Romanticism. In 1842 she wrote a commentary/translation of Bettine Brentano-von Arnim’s epistolary novel *Die Gûnderode* (1840), which appeared in the *Dial* (while she was the editor). In her analysis of the article, Christina Zwarg reads Fuller’s translation as an act of feminist agency: “[i]t is telling that most of her published translations were from German, the one language she taught herself” (*Feminist Conversations* 61). Building on what Zwarg, as well as Carol Strauss Sotiropoulos, have written on the subject, I wish to explore the feminist undertone of Fuller’s commentary on friendship in “Bettine Brentano and Her Friend Gûnderode.” For Fuller, Bettine and Karoline von Gûnderode were symbols of German female accomplishment, and their letters presented a “view of the interior of German life, and of an ideal relation realized.” Reflecting on Fuller’s idealization of German womanhood, I wish to demonstrate how Brentano and Gûnderode’s relationship allowed her to resolve the constraining nineteenth-century dichotomy that weighed on all women writers at the time—that

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is, how to both be a woman and an artist. I also wish to compare Fuller's take on female friendship with Simone de Beauvoir's newly discovered novella *The Inseparables* (written in 1954, it was put to the side by de Beauvoir and published posthumously by her daughter in 2020). Not only do these texts resemble each other in the way in which their feminist authors describe female friendships, but they also speak to each other about the power of queerness to fight against the patriarchy and the importance of celebrating such relationships between women.

Keywords: Margaret Fuller; Bettine Brentano; Simone de Beauvoir; Feminism; Transcendentalism; Romanticism

*Alice de Galzain recently completed her Ph.D. at the University of Edinburgh. In her doctoral thesis, entitled "Rewriting the Life of an 'Ultra-Radical': Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller, and Memoirs of Margaret Fuller Ossoli (1852)," she looked at how Emerson's and Fuller's different understandings of womanhood impacted their views of society and the American nation. Specialized in nineteenth-century U.S. literature, Alice's research interests include Transcendentalism, transnational writing, abolitionism, and women's studies. She is this year's recipient of the American Antiquarian Society Barbara L. Packer Fellowship (2023-2024). Her article on "Transcendentalist Women in Conversation: Margaret Fuller, Sophia Ripley, and 'Woman'" appeared last year in Transatlantica: Revue d'études américaines. American Studies Journal.*

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"THE END OF THE WESTERN: JAN JÓZEF SZCZEPAŃSKI  
ABOUT AMERICA IN THE 50S AND 60S"

*The End of the Western*, published in 1971, is the title of a collection of reportages by a Polish writer, Jan Józef Szczepański, written after his stay in the United States from October 1968 to June 1969. The title *The End of the Western*, chosen by Szczepański for a book about America in the late 1960s, is intentionally ambiguous. Ten years earlier, he had been in the United States on a summer scholarship at Harvard University, so he had a basis for comparing the changes that had taken place in America in the late 1960s. The imposing context for the changes presented in the book was the model of a pioneer who faces the dangers of an unknown land and subdues it—in accordance with the biblical command.

In the paper, I pay special attention to the ideological and moral effects of the flower-children revolution, analyzed by Szczepański. He thought that the “kids’ revolution” had marked the end of America as it had been. The writer also looked at the emancipatory movements of black Americans and he inquired about the reasons for the passivity of Native Americans in demanding their rights. At that time, he could only describe the unjust situation of the indigenous people, confined to reservations, thrown to the margins of American society. Looking at America, however, he saw symptoms that led him to acutely recognize the end of the dominance of the civilization of the “white conqueror of the Wild West.”

Keywords: Jan Józef Szczepański, *The End of the Western*, reportage, flower-power revolution

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#### “EVERYDAY PILGRIMS. NEW MEXICO FRANCISCAN MISSIONS AND COMMUNITIES”

The experience of the spiritual journey of the Franciscan communities in New Mexico was conditioned by their activities. The first way to realize spiritual life was through missionary activity. Its conduct was under the principle of preaching the Gospel to all nations by the pilgrim Church and corresponded to the charism of St. Francis of Assisi. That is how the first Franciscans, who since 1540 accompanied the settlers settling in New Mexico, understood their way. The preserved diaries and catechisms document the formation of the system of colonial missions and contacts with the indigenous inhabitants of this region. Women’s orders also participated in evangelization. They supported missionary work and led a life of inner prayer, as evidenced by the preserved correspondence and visitation files. That is the second way of experiencing the spiritual path. The Center



for Action and Contemplation, organized 35 years ago by the Franciscan friar Richard Rohr in Albuquerque, directly refers to the practice of contemplation. He believes there is a deep connection between the inner revolution of prayer and the transformation of social structures and social consciousness, and that nurturing a contemplative consciousness in the world is now more important than ever. It proposes a daily practice—a spiritual journey, with prayer, reflection, humility and self-knowledge. He believes that we become ourselves through the choices we make. “Wherever you are on your spiritual journey—God is there”—this is the basis of engaged contemplation, rooted in a living, evolving Christian tradition. That is the third way to experience the spiritual path, promoted by spirituality programs, publications and web applications. The paper plans to characterize the development of methods of experiencing the spiritual path in the Franciscan environment in the past and today.

Keywords: spiritual journey, meditation, New Mexico, Franciscans, The Center for Action and Contemplation

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## “CHE GUEVARA’S MOTORCYCLE DIARIES AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE LATIN AMERICAN PLURIVERSAL POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS”

Ernesto “Che” Guevara, a figure who rose to an almost messianic status after his death in 1967, has been immortalised through Alberto Korda’s iconic photograph and numerous biographies,

among which Jon Lee Anderson's *Che Guevara: A Revolutionary Life* stands as the definitive work. However, Guevara's own writings, particularly his *Motorcycle Diaries* (1995) offer a first-person perspective of the experiences that transformed him from an Argentine medical student into one of the 20th century's most influential political figures. This paper examines these experiences and delves particularly into what scholars have suggested is his uniquely Pan-American political vision. Che's political awakening is closely connected with his encounters with poverty, social injustice, and marginalisation—conditions that were not only widespread, but constituted the unifying characteristic of otherwise culturally and linguistically diverse communities across a vast and varied South American landscape. Importantly, this travel narrative, and its gesture toward a new kind of politics, one of interrelation, interconnection, and radical co-implication, resonates with ideas now reaching full maturity in contemporary Latin American thought and action, such as in the 'pluriversal politics' of Walter Dignolo, Sylvia Wynter, Arturo Escobar, and Enrique Dussel (and indeed already activated by such actors as the Zapatista movement in its pedagogical initiatives among indigenous communities in Mexico). While a half-century separates "Che" and this new episteme, this paper argues that there remain important continuities, not least the messianic tonalities that ring in quiet conversation between artists, poets, writers and intellectuals anywhere in Latin America when recounting the yet-unrealized political dreams of immortalised young revolutionaries. This paper argues, in fact, that what is projected onto the horizon of any new political left in Latin America, is precisely the image of a youthful "Che" mounted on his motorcycle.

Keywords: Che Guevara, *Motorcycle Diaries*, pluriverse, Latin America

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### “NATIVE AMERICANS THROUGH HANNA AL-MAWSULI’S *TRAVELS 1668–1683*: AN ARAB CHRISTIAN IN COLONIAL SPANISH AMERICA”

This paper analyzes the travelogue of Hanna al-Mawsuli, an Arab Christian who composed the first account of Spanish America to be written in Arabic. His book, *The Book of Travels of the Priest Ilyas, Son of the Cleric Hanna al-Mawsuli 1668–1683*, documents the interaction between Western Europeans and the Levant in the early modern period through the activities of Catholic missionaries. While such an account provides an important perspective on the “Levantine” view of Spanish and American Indian populations in the early modern period, I argue that it represents a discursive dialectic between Spanish colonial knowledge and the Levantine lexicon of Eastern Christianity that resulted in a perceptual synthesis through which al-Mawsuli understood colonial Spanish America and native Indians. The native populations emerge as savages but also as beneficiaries who materially and religiously reaped the fruit of Spain’s New Colonial World. The complexity of al-Mawsuli’s travel account stems from its bicultural referentiality. He was a Catholic priest and an Iraqi Christian living under Ottoman rule who spoke Arabic, Latin, Eastern Syriac, Spanish, French, and Turkish well enough to give sermons, perform mass, and translate from all of them. Additionally, this paper also illuminates an implicit telos of epistemic imperialism, namely how colonial epistemologies became itinerant discourses traveling from imperial geographies to the outside world and engulfing the representational prism of countries and communities that never had direct interaction with the Americas.

Keywords: Arab Christian, Native Indians, Colonial Spanish America, Colonial Epistemology, Imperialism

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## “THE OTHERING OF UNCLE SAM: AMERICA THROUGH ALIEN EYES”

The concept of “othering” refers to the process of perceiving and treating certain groups or individuals as different or separate from oneself. In the case of Uncle Sam, a symbol often associated with the United States, there can be instances of othering. To some foreigners, Uncle Sam may represent American hegemony or global influence, which can lead to feelings of being excluded or marginalized. The image of Uncle Sam, with his iconic hat and stern expression, has been used in political cartoons, media, and propaganda, sometimes perpetuating stereotypes or reinforcing perceptions of America as an imposing force. While not everyone may engage in othering, it is crucial to recognize that individuals from various backgrounds may interpret and relate to Uncle Sam differently based on their personal experiences and perspectives. Literary theorists, such as Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, and Homi K. Bhabha, have extensively explored the concept of the “other” and its implications. They examine how the “other” is constructed through binary oppositions (e.g., self/other, civilized/savage) and how this construction shapes social relations, identity formation, and the representation of difference. In literary theory the concept of the “other” refers to a theoretical framework that explores the representation and construction of difference, alterity, and marginalization within literature. It examines how texts create and define an “other” as someone/something different from the dominant or privileged group. The “other” can be characterized by race, gender, sexuality, class, nationality, or any other aspect of identity that distinguishes it from the norm. The notion of the “other” highlights the power dynamics inherent in literary works and their social and historical contexts. It emphasizes

how certain groups are marginalized, silenced, or excluded while the dominant group establishes norms and asserts its authority. The “other” often becomes a site of contestation, as literature may challenge or reinforce existing stereotypes, prejudices, or social hierarchies. Our paper would highlight the operation of how power dynamics and the dominant narratives are challenged, and what are the underlying ideologies and assumptions that influence the representation of marginalized groups, focusing on selected texts like *Interpreter of Maladies* and *The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri, *The Inscrutable Americans* by Anurag Mathur, and *Americana* by Chimananda Ngozi Adichie.

Keywords: othering, Americas, social relations, stereotypes, postcolonialism

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“DEHLEEZ TON PAAR (CROSSING THE THRESHOLD):  
A STUDY OF THE MULTIPLE CROSSINGS IN SELECTED WORKS  
OF SURJEET KALSEY”

Diasporic Writers have written of the experiences of the immigrants in a new land and the angst, sense of loss, marginalization, insecurity, and the yearnings for home they experience as they negotiate the socio-cultural spaces of the host nation. They often delineate the impact of the host culture on the culture of the home country. Surjeet Kalsey, an Indian-Canadian writer who writes in both Punjabi, her mother tongue, and in English has in her writings engaged with all such concerns, but prominent in her work is her concern for women's issues and the violence in the home. She urges women to overcome the restrictive boundaries imposed on them, to break free of the cycles of exploitation and work towards the actualization of their true potentials. Kalsey published her first collection of poetry in 1979 in Punjabi and has since, published poetry, short stories and drama in both English and Punjabi. A prolific writer, translator, editor, she has grown as a writer in both the Punjabi and English fields. As a certified family counsellor, she has access to the traumas and travails of women of Punjabi-Canadian households and has written about them in her works. Her contribution to the community and its literature can be judged from the fact that she was awarded the lifetime achievement award for her literature in 2014 by the Asian Studies Department, University of British Columbia. This paper will explore some of Kalsey's writings to understand how the lives of the Punjabi (Indian) women have changed by crossing over to a Western Continent. The paper will also see if the Diasporic Punjabi woman's concerns have changed from the 70s to the current multicultural, transnational, global times, as according to Stuart Hall, "Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference." Another question that will be addressed is: Are there any differences in themes between the Punjabi and English works of Kalsey? This

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would throw light on the allegation against writers, particularly the writers of the Diaspora that they write for a specific audience.

Keywords: Surjit Kalsey, Diaspora, women writers, Panjabi writer

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#### “MEET ME IN THE KITCHEN: TRANSOCEANIC JOURNEY OF RECIPES AND VISIONS OF AFRICA”

Since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, food and foodways have become substantial in sustaining culinary heritage and restoring cultural identity. Cookbooks written by African and African American chefs, historians, and restaurateurs also reflect this urge to recognize African cultural identity through food and foodways. Opening a place for cookbooks in the U.S. culinary bookshelves that bind personal narratives with diverse ethnic and diasporic foodways invites the readers to interact with recipes from Africa that underline the richness of African culinary culture and transcultural foodways. Among the many, Hawa Hassan is a vibrant chef and an entrepreneur whose home country is Somalia. After long years spent in the United States away from her family as a refugee, Hassan reclaimed her connection with her family, cultural roots, and home by building bridges through food and foodways. Inspired by Somalian sauces, she initiated the Basbass Sauce Company in 2015. Hassan defines food as a language that enabled her to reconnect with her roots and make her feel grounded after years of assimilation in the United States. By traveling to Africa and col-

lecting stories and recipes across Eritrea, Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, South Africa, Madagascar, and Comoros, Hawa Hassan, and Julia Kurshen illustrate how food and its meaning change when it travels and how it continues to connect people, generations, and cultures. The stories and recipes are compiled under the cookbook entitled, *In Bibi's Kitchen* (2020). The cookbook consists of stories and recipes of bibis (grandmothers) from eight African countries coasting the Indian Ocean. As well as sustaining cultural legacy, the cookbook narrates how stories and flavors shift countries and cross borders. While some grandmothers remain in their home country, some have migrated to the U.S. and keep their home recipes to sustain their culture legacy and feel connected to home. Therefore, the influence of transoceanic journeys as well as the history of colonialism can be traced in recipes and stories. This paper discusses how Hawa Hassan explores Africa's culinary and cultural diversity and builds personal and communal resilience through the recipes and stories in *In Bibi's Kitchen*.

Keywords: Food and Travel Narratives, African Diaspora, Trans-cultural Foodways, Culinary Culture, Cultural diversity

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## “RITE OF PASSAGES IN LITERATURE: TIME TRAVELING”

The concept of time travel has been studied by various disciplines such as, Physics, Mathematics, Astronomy, Philosophy and Sociology. Even before the first publication of Albert Einstein's article (1905)



concerning the “relativity,” time and travelling had already been initiated as leitmotifs into various literary works of in the second half of the nineteenth century. Taking some of the major novels and short stories into a subject matter, this study aims to illustrate that the time travels in literature function as *rites de passage*, a term first coined by Arnold Van Gennep. Through this vein, his methodological classifications, namely “rites of separation”, “rites of transition”, and “rites of incorporations”, will shape the theoretical background of the literary works in hand: Enrique Gaspar’s *El Anacronopete*, Ray Bradbury’s short story “A Sound of Thunder” and Isaac Asimov’s *The End of the Eternity*. In order to elaborate the argument, questions such as, how do all the main characters in above-mentioned works, physically or mentally, experience a change? Through the classifications of Van Gennep, how do time machines function as thresholds for the main characters in their travels?

Keywords: Time Travel, Literature, Rites of Passage

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“‘AN ENGLISHMAN IN NEW YORK’ AND MORE:  
A STORY OF ACADEMIC MOBILITY AND TRANSATLANTIC TRAVEL.  
THE CASE OF ARTHUR R. BURNS IN NORTH AMERICA (1926–1928)”

On October 18, 1926, Arthur Burns first stepped foot in Manhattan. The “unimpressive” Statue of Liberty was soon distanced, and the young scholar was left with the Manhattan skyline, which he

regarded as the “first glorious manifestations of the American civilization.” Reunited with his wife, Eveline Richardson Burns, he settled in New York City and began his new life chapter. After obtaining their Ph.D. in economics from the London School of Economics in London, both Burns were awarded a postdoctoral fellowship from the Laura Spellman Rockefeller Memorial, an organization from the Rockefeller Foundation’s galaxy funding social sciences, to pursue their research in the United States. The couple spent the first few months in New York City, where they lived in an apartment next to Columbia University, where Arthur Burns became a lecturer in economics. They then traveled throughout the country, occasionally crossing the borders to visit parts of Canada. Arthur Burns recounted his research trip in his travel diary. He described his research work, a study of competition in industry, but also his life beyond this professional setting: his hiking trips with his wife, the evenings spent at restaurants, theaters, with friends. The journal reflects not only his research activities, but also his social and intimate relationships, and his impressions as a foreigner navigating the United States. His testimony displays a young academic meeting the American intellectual elite, who is starving for cultural experiences, and practicing tourism in iconic places. He is a commentator on American social and economic life—his research in economics leads him to meet industrialists, workers, and union representatives—and is also invested in political stakes. Having arrived just before the midterm elections held in November 1926, he was introduced to high-standing political figures by his American friends. Arthur Burns examines American society from the perspective of a scholar, tourist, expat, or young, cultivated Englishman. His diary provides a vivid account of American intellectual, economic, and political life during the 1920s

Keywords: Travel diary, academic mobility, Laura Spellman Rockefeller Memorial, social sciences, North America, transatlantic travel, couple

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scientific community, and their intellectual programs, through the analysis of a colossal undertaking, the *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, edited by economists Alvin Johnson and Edwin Seligman, between 1930 and 1935. The archival material used in the dissertation prompted her to examine the issue of academic endogamy. Since 2022, Marie Linos' research has been devoted to the study of academic couples, namely scholars who shared their work and intimacy. After a first postdoctoral experience at the Department of the History of Science at Harvard University in 2022, supported by the Belgian American Educational Foundation, she is currently a Wiener-Anspach postdoctoral fellow at the Faculty of History at the University of Oxford and a Junior Research Fellow at Wolfson College. Her current research interests include the history of female social scientists, the matrimonial and domestic relationships in science, and the impact of gender on science production.

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“FROM MEDIEVAL TRAVEL NARRATIVES TO THE PLANETARY ROMANCE: ALIEN ENCOUNTERS IN EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS’ *A PRINCESS OF MARS*”

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Edgar Rice Burroughs, one of the most popular authors of early science fiction, has been credited with the invention of the science fictional subgenre of the planetary romance, consisting in escapist tales set on another planet among alien species. The planetary romance departs from traditional science fictional conventions in that it does not adhere to plausible scientific laws as science fictional stories generally do, often giving special attention to monsters, exotic settings, swordplay, supernatural powers, and romance as well as to encounters between the main hero and alien beings whose society often resembles that of Earth's premodern past. This kind of plotline was heavily influenced not only by frontier narratives describing the US expansion westward, but also by travelogues and what John Rieder has defined as “medievalist and imperial” stories about lost races and marvelous journeys of the late nineteenth century, in turn taking inspiration from medieval travel narratives. In this light, the paper aims to analyze the way Burroughs' *A Princess of Mars*, the first novel of his Barsoom series, depicts the encounter between self and Other articulated through the attitude of the main hero John Carter toward the alien species he encounter and interacts with during his travels on Mars. In particular, the paper argues that

the novel's attentive descriptions of the flora, fauna, and hybrid inhabitants on the planet, which show an indebtedness on the part of Burroughs to travelogues and ethnographic writing, reveals a similar anxiety, engendered by the alien Others' hybridity and blurring of boundaries between human and nonhuman, to that expressed toward the monstrous beings populating medieval travel narratives, encyclopedias, *mappae mundi*, and chivalric romances. Thus, the paper aims to demonstrate that, just as these medieval sources present journeying as a source of anxiety derived from the encounter with monstrous Others, so Burroughs's depiction of the uncivilized medieval-like monstrous creatures Carter encounters in the strange and hostile wilderness upon his arrival on Mars serves to reassert the boundaries of the human or, rather, of the normative exclusionary conception of the human as white, western male.

Keywords: science fiction, medievalism, alien alterity, monsters, Edgar Rice Burroughs

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#### "NEW AMERICAN GRAND TOURS AND TRAVEL NARRATIVES OF VIDEO BLOGGERS: LEISURE, CULTURAL MYTHS AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT IN VISUAL STORYTELLING"

The article looks at the travel narratives of Polish video bloggers who treat the journey through the Americas as a con-

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temporary Grand Tour. Video blogs and their visual storytelling are becoming tools for describing the world in the digital era. In this context, the Americas take on the meaning of a world that is both close and distant simultaneously. Travelling on both continents of the other hemisphere is characterized by a double clash of civilizations and a confrontation with one's imagination created based on contacts with the media and culture of both Americas. It is also a clash with the myth of America and, at the same time, a story about the role of a blogger as a narrator, consolidating his audience and the network community in the role of looking beyond the horizon and behind the scenes of "real America". The research will use the analysis of the content of audiovisual material collected on selected travel channels on YouTube and elements of netnographic analysis of virtual communities centred around such vlogs as *Busem przez świat*, *Bez Planu*, *Planeta Abstrakcja* or *Interameryka*. Various ways for vloggers to achieve audience engagement and the tension between rest and work, as well as between free discovery and crisis management accompanying the story of travel at the micro and macro level, will be presented concerning global phenomena such as pandemic or armed conflicts and their echoes.

Keywords: media studies, digital narratives, visual storytelling, travel videoblogs

*Anna Maj, Ph.D., cultural and media studies expert, communicologist; assistant professor at the Institute of Cultural Studies of the University of Silesia in Katowice, former Vice-Director of the Institute (2012–2019). Her main research interests are: new media, cyber arts, media anthropology, communication behaviours, user experience, travel narrations, digital memory. Author of two monographs: Media w podróży (Media in Travel, 2008, 2010) and Przemiany wiedzy w cyberkulturze (Transformations of Knowledge in Cyberculture, 2021), scientific editor of 9 multi-author monographs on new media, cultural communication and digital art (Brill, Leiden; Rodopi, Amsterdam-New York; Inter-Disciplinary Press, Oxford). Cultmedia (International Network for Culture and Media) Scientific Board Member (from 2022), Steering Group Member and Steering Group & Project Leader in Inter-Disciplinary Net (Oxford) (2008–2016), Enable Network Member (2012–2013).*

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“‘YET MUTE WITH WONDERING AWE, THE NEW WORLD MEETS THE OLD’: THE CHARACTER OF POCAHONTAS AS THE EMBODIMENT OF ‘TERRA INCOGNITA’ IN TRANSNATIONAL TRAVEL DISCOURSES”

“Yet mute with wondering awe, the New World meets the Old,”—these lines from Lydia Sigourney’s poem “Pocahontas” (1841) reflect the feelings European settlers had during their first encounter with America. This exploration of the New World’s places by the Old World’s people gave birth to transnational travel discourses, including the story of Pocahontas. While having several historical and fictional representations, it depicts a daughter of Native American Chief Powhatan, who is believed to save the life of the English Captain John Smith after his arrival at the colonial settlement of Jamestown, Virginia. In this paper, I will analyze how Pocahontas is depicted in transnational travel discourses. I will explore, compare, and contrast her historical and fictional representations by taking a look at Captain John Smith’s narrative *A True Relation of Virginia* (1608) and *The Generall Historie* (1624), Walt Disney’s animation film *Pocahontas* (1995), Daniele J. Suissa’s film *Pocahontas: The Legend* (1995), and Terrence Malick’s film *The New World* (2005). This way, I will shed light on the ways in which transnational travel discourses have perpetuated colonial perspectives and stereotypes of Indigenous people. I show that the fictional and historical representations of the ‘Princess of the New World’ are quite different (for instance, the relationship of Pocahontas and John Smith is frequently romanticized in fiction, even though the latter depicts her as a child rather than a woman of interest in his historical narrative. I will also argue that both fictional and historical representations of Pocahontas show her as the embodiment of *terra incognita*. Her free-spirited, rebellious, and (to a certain extent) savage nature reflects the Eurocentric view on the unfamiliar and mysterious world that Captain John Smith and other settlers encountered when traveling from the Old World (Europe) to the New World (Americas). In other words, I will make a journey across historical and fictional representations

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of Pocahontas in transnational travel discourses with the purpose of, citing Walt Disney's *Pocahontas*, constructing "a bridge of love between two worlds."

Keywords: New World, Terra Incognita, Native Americans, Pocahontas, Eurocentrism

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#### "SOLIDARITY AMIDST DIFFERENCES: LADY ABALA BOSE'S SOJOURN IN AMERICA"

Travel is a fundamental part of human experience, providing opportunities for cultural exchange and promoting global fellowship beyond national boundaries. As globalization intensifies the "habits of coexistence", travel and cross-cultural contact negate differences towards an "openness to the world." The resulting acculturated "in-between space" emerges from affiliating the "distinct, even disjunct" with one another in the spirit of a "right to difference in equality," where intellectual and creative openness accelerate the "[d]issolution of ego boundaries" and develops the contact zone. Lady Abala Bose's travelogues exemplify this

concept by locating her empathy and humanism through an intercultural self-understanding that leads to global understanding. Her American travel writings create a cultural synthesis essential for the critical cosmopolitan perspective of a traveler. With her anti-autoethnographic approach, Bose observes life processes accepting cultural alterity, and interrogating the “anti-conquest” point of view of the “seeing man” to emerge as a “feeling individual” who embraces diversity along with its cultural and psychological paradigms to appreciate “what distinguishes us from each other.” This paper aims to examine how Lady Bose’s American travelogue negotiates similarity and difference and emphasizes the importance of “habits of coexistence” to create a new type of travel writing that focuses not only on what we see but, how we see.

Keywords: Lady Abala Bose, Travel Writing, Cosmopolitanism, Intercultural Understanding, Globalization

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### “FROM SUPERHIGHWAY TO HYPERREALITY: THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF ‘ASTRAL AMERICA’”

During a series of road-trips undertaken in the 1970s, the French theorist Jean Baudrillard encountered an American West that had become a laboratory of *hyperreality*. This “Astral America” extended to the deserts, suburbs, and sprawling metropoli of the former frontier and was to be found in the “marvelously



affectless succession of signs, images, faces, and ritual acts on the road” (50). Ostensibly in the U.S. in an academic capacity, Baudrillard proudly forewent libraries and lecture halls in favor of his private automobile, which he piloted through the desert at high speed, taking in the swirling housing tracts, strip-malls, motels, and other roadside simulacra of the American dream. Not being native to them, Baudrillard could see in these spaces what otherwise eluded his American colleagues, who had turned their backs on them “as the Greeks turned their back on the sea” (66). This fifteen-minute presentation takes an infrastructural approach to Baudrillard’s observations about “Astral America,” published in 1986 as *America* (trans. 1988). In this work of travelogue-theory, Baudrillard claims the perspective of an outside observer, but he displays a not-uncharacteristic American attraction to the space of the road, begging the question: what is the link between postmodern theory and automobile infrastructure? This presentation uses Cotten Seiler’s concept “apparatus of automobility” (2008) to interrogate the material and discursive relations between Baudrillard’s text and the period in the history of American automobility in which it emerges. Just as the Interstate Highway was solidifying the private car’s supremacy, the OPEC oil embargo brought the petroleum-powered, auto-mobile ideal of the good life into crisis, opening intellectual inroads for thinking the U.S.’s hyperreal self-production while aboard the nation’s superhighways. Finally, this presentation proposes an infrastructural account of the postmodern moment that would situate concepts from French theory and their uptake in the American academy within a context of transnationally mediated transport infrastructures.

Keywords: infrastructure, automobility, postmodernism, hyper-reality, French theory

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## “EZRA POUND’S JOURNEY FROM TRAVEL WRITING TO EPIC WRITING” (ON-SITE)

Multilingual poet, literary critic, radio speaker, Confucian fascist, conspiracy theorist, experimental translator, incendiary pamphleteer, travel writer and writing traveler, Ezra Pound (1885-1972) is one of the most visible and controversial literary figures of the twentieth century. Recently, the American critic Alec Marsh has provocatively suggested that, were Pound still alive, “today he would be a hyper-active blogger.” Pound’s multidimensional career and uncompromising life encapsulate crucial questions about the role of the artist in modern society: What is the relationship between experimental art and extreme political views? Why do we make art? Can art change the world? Probably this explains why scholars with very different interests and political leanings feel still compelled to discuss his work, life, and radical politics. In this talk, I discuss *A Walking Tour in Southern France*—Richard Sieburth’s critical edition of Pound’s notes made during his 1912 walking tour in France—alongside selected passages from *The Cantos* in order to show how Pound’s “epic” mode of writing owes much to his early interest in and experimentation with travel writing. The talk also examines the ways in which Pound’s modernist travel writing both derives from and reinvents a rich tradition of American travel writing that includes such notable writers as Washington Irving, Mark Twain, and Henry James.

Keywords: Ezra Pound, modernism, travel writing

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and Leslie Marmon Silko. He is currently working on a book project titled *Homo Legens: Modes and Moods of Reading from the Puritans to Twitter* and will be co-editing a critical edition of the *Pound-Hesse letters*. Since 2019 he has served as Book Review Editor of the *Review of International American Studies (RIAS)*, the flagship journal of the *International American Studies Association*.

✉ RENATA NOWACZEWSKA

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### “COLD WAR ENCOUNTERS: ROCKEFELLER AND FORD FOUNDATIONS’ REPORTS ON THEIR VISITS TO EASTERN EUROPE”

With the opening of the travelling possibilities, first to Western and then to Eastern Europe, Rockefeller Foundation and later on Ford Foundation officers undertook the hardships in order to visit the countries that had been benefiting from the Foundation’s generous stipend, scholarship, fellowship and aid programs in the Inter-War Period. In an attempt to resume scientific cooperation, induce research, develop educational facilities, and locate prospective individuals, the officers set off on their missions. The paper examines the travelling experiences the officers had while visiting among others Polish universities, research centers meeting with both scientists and authorities. In their extensive, extremely detailed diaries they share their impressions of the living and working conditions, difficulties people had to encounter, problems the scientists were facing. They evaluated candidates, estimated their intellectual aptitude, and the needs of local research centers. In their diaries the officers analyzed the political situation in both Western and Eastern Europe. Trying to steer away from grand politics, however, the officers’ encounters served first hand intelligence materials that the Department of State was more than eager to utilize; it gave the inner look into the needs and hardships of the behind the Iron Curtain scientific world, providing first-hand experience of the life in the Communist dominated countries, played a role in determining the candidate selections for the fellowships (often times resulting in their future career success or failure) and many more.

Keywords: Cold War, private foundations, officers’ diaries

*Renata Nowaczewska is an Assistant Professor of History and American Studies at the University of Szczecin, Poland. She has published articles, book chapters on philanthropy in international context, social welfare, foundations and their interactions with the government. Her award-winning book on public and private unemployment relief during the Great Depression discusses the role private foundations and community funds played in H. Hoover's and F. D. Roosevelt's administrations, cooperating, or competing with their relief efforts. Her research interests lie in the history of philanthropy, foreign aid, social history and intellectual history, exchange programs and the role international actors play within broadly defined transnational relations. Her current book project explores the mechanisms of reinforcing/implementing democratic values through the exchange programs and other cultural activities during the Cold War period in select European countries. She has explored the role the big foundations (Ford and Rockefeller Foundations) played in organizing help to the refugees and escapees from the Eastern Europe.*

👤 EIKO OHIRA

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#### “THE 1893 WORLD’S PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS AS A CONTACT ZONE: JAPANESE BUDDHISTS’ CHALLENGE TO CULTURAL IMPERIALISM”

In 1893, The World’s Parliament of religions in connection with the Columbian Exposition of 1893 was held in Chicago. The basic idea of the Congress was the reconciliation of religions. However, the organizers’ intention was to confirm the supremacy of Christianity by incorporating other heterogeneous religions within the Christian framework. Behind the divergence between the liberal-oriented purpose of the conference and the intentions of the organizers was a sense of crisis on the part of the American churches at the time about the declining influence of Christianity. There was also a desire for a new type of religion among the people who were not satisfied with the established religions, and the rise of theosophy, which prompted the popularity of Buddhism. On the other hand, Japan at this time was in the process of modernization after the Meiji Restoration, and the urgent issue was to reform and modernize Buddhism. Japan was also forced to deal with the skepticism of Western Buddhist scholars toward the orthodoxy of Mahayana Buddhism. In the midst of this crisis, Japanese Buddhists were acquiring a perspective that relativized traditional Buddhism and reinterpreted it as a world

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religion with universality through active exchanges with overseas Buddhist scholars. Japanese Buddhists saw the global conference of religions held under these circumstances as an excellent opportunity to clear up Western misconceptions about Buddhism and to demonstrate its effectiveness in the modern age. In line with the purpose of the conference, which was based on religious liberalism (reconciliation and dialogue among religions), the Buddhist delegation arrived at the conference venue with a new reading of Japanese Buddhism as a religion appropriate for modern society. Their presentations were generally well received, taking into consideration the religious situation in the U.S. at that time, when a universal, rational, ethical religion was being sought. It is significant that the vision of relativizing Christianity was raised at the global conference, opening the way for further dialogue with the rest of the world. This was the epoch-making significance and role of this conference as a contact zone.

Keywords: Dialogue among religions, Lafcadio Hearn, Toki Horyu, Shaku Soen

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“ENCHANTED BY THE AMERICANNES(?).  
TRAVELING TO AMERICA THROUGH CONSUMPTION”

The American myth fires up the imagination. It is undoubtedly fascinating how the culture, civilization and society of a relatively young country can currently shape and effectively influence

the world to such an extent. Buying certain items produced by American brands can “bring us closer” to this lifestyle and culture (even without travelling to that country). The presentation reflects on this intensification of consumption based on the vision of America presented in movies, TV series, reality shows, the internet and social media (movie stars, celebrities, influencers), some kind of “virtual travel” through “objects” (clothes, foods, cosmetics, gadgets, etc.) carrying “Americanness”. The first part analyses the popular American stereotypes and the American Myth, a paradoxical phenomenon, full of contradictions (described by Jean Baudrillard). The author focuses on the popularity of certain brands which are the “essence” of the American life and rethinks the influence of the processes of McDonaldisation, disneyization and appleization on modern culture.


Keywords: American Myth, consumption, semiotics, appleization of culture

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“NOMADIC NOTIONS:  
LIFE ON THE ROAD IN CHLOÉ ZHAO’S *NOMADLAND*”

Based partly on Jessica Bruder’s 2017 nonfiction book *Nomadland: Surviving America in the Twenty-First Century*, Chloé Zhao’s 2020 film *Nomadland* received praise from professional critics and won several awards including three Academy Awards in 2021 for Best Picture, Best Director and Best Actress. Set in 2011, in the wake of the 2008 recession, the film presents the story of sixty-one-year old Fern (played by Frances

McDormand) as she travels across the American West looking for work and taking on seasonal and odd jobs. Her nomadic lifestyle starts due to economic and physical displacement after the US Gypsum plant in Empire Nevada where she works shuts down. Having lost her husband, her job, the company home, and the whole town, Fern packs her life into her van and hits the road. The film follows Fern on a healing journey, meeting and sharing with other modern-day nomads, learning about survival and people who have formed kinship and communities. While these encounters and friendships demonstrate the joys and independence of this alternative way of life, they also offer a glimpse of the various social and economic factors that caused some to freely choose, and others to be forced to lead a mobile lifestyle. This paper will examine how the film celebrates the free spirit and resilience of these often-times marginalized people and their unconventional lifestyle, and also how it reveals their precarious economic situations as transient laborers or “workampers.” Although it is set against a romanticized Western landscape full of beautiful open spaces, by presenting economic inequalities and problems in the healthcare and social security systems, the film also shows the reality behind such American national ideals as self-reliance, freedom, individualism and myths such as the American Dream.

Keywords: *Nomadland*, Film Studies, American West, van-dwelling, modern-day nomads

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¶ ANITA PATTERSON

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## “ROBERT HAYDEN, T. S. ELIOT, AND THE MIDDLE PASSAGE”

In 1966, during the First Fisk University Writers' Conference, Robert Hayden, whose *Ballad of Remembrance* had recently been awarded the Grand Prix at the Third World Festival of Negro Arts in Dakar, said “Let's quit saying we're black writers writing to black folks—it has been given an importance it should not have.” As a result, Hayden was attacked as “a traitor to his race.” It is relatively well known that Hayden was profoundly influenced by T. S. Eliot, but more should be said about how his engagement with Eliot's modernism has importance for the ongoing reappraisal of the Black Arts era. One of Hayden's best-known poems, “Middle Passage,” offers a collage of voices and perspectives drawn from ship's logs and memoirs by slave traders as well as other documents he discovered while researching in the archives of the Schomburg Center in New York. This paper will show how, by placing *The Waste Land* in a dialogue with Hayden's “Middle Passage,” we will gain new insights into Eliot's poem. Decades ago, Henry Louis Gates developed a concept of “motivated signifying” that could be used to denote a mode of cross-racial repetition and revision serving “to create a space for the revising text” and “alter[ing] fundamentally the way we read the tradition, by defining the relation of the text at hand to the tradition.” Exploring how, taken together, Hayden's allusions to works by Shakespeare, Coleridge, and John Greenleaf Whittier constitute signifying on Eliot, in Gates's sense, I will demonstrate how this changes the way we read Eliot's *The Waste Land* with regard to the haunting presence of the Middle Passage in the poem. By acknowledging this crucial but neglected aspect of Eliot's legacy, we can better explain how the Black Arts Movement laid a foundation for poetry by Michael Harper, Rita Dove, and others.

Keywords: Modernism, Race, Middle Passage, Poetry

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and Transnational Modernisms (Cambridge University Press, 2008). She is currently researching how the widening popularity of Japonisme fostered an American literary tradition of transpacific exchange that extends from Emerson and T.S. Eliot up through the Black Chicago Renaissance and the haiku-inspired poetry of Robert Hayden and Richard Wright.

✉ ELISA PESCE

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### “TRAVEL AND THE SELF IN MAGGIE SHIPSTEAD’S *THE GREAT CIRCLE*”

This paper presents travel as the nexus between the two protagonists of Maggie Shipstead’s *The Great Circle* (2021): aviator Marian Graves, whose passion for flight and physical travel around the globe in the 1950s doubles as, and intensifies, an inner journey of self-discovery, and Hadley Baxter, a contemporary Hollywood actress who interprets Marian in a biopic and, through this experience, identifies with her, expanding her consciousness and constructing herself as woman. Marian and Hadley have similar, tragic family histories and, despite living a century apart, are both subject to the violence and constraints of a patriarchal society that deprives women of agency and condemns the transgression of gender roles. Consequently, the novel deploys multiple forms of travel and travel writing to ask what it means to be a woman in the United States and explore the contribution of physical and metaphorical journey to the discovery of the self, other people and the world. While close in scope to canonical male travel narratives, I argue that *The Great Circle* juxtaposes different texts (Marian’s logbook, a novel and a biography based on it, and Hadley’s movie) and, therefore, different accounts of Marian’s life, to raise questions about the very possibility of knowing anything or anybody. The novel simultaneously denounces women’s objectification by presenting both Marian and Hadley as public figures constructed by others: Marian’s logbook is fictionalised and published without her consent, while Hadley exists only in the characters that she plays and the image that the tabloids project of her. Shipstead’s ambiguous use of the symbolism of the circle further complicates the novel’s epistemological inquiry by betraying expectations about closure and continuity: in the end, the two protagonists find self-


awareness and freedom in the acknowledgement that closure is just a fantasy, but one that must nevertheless be pursued because, as the woman who pays for her flight tells Marian, 'The experience is the thing. You. Not some imaginary line on the globe' (Shipstead 2021). Thus, all circles and journeys in the novel remain open-ended and merge with one another, connecting people and experiences across space and time.

Keywords: travel in American fiction, women and travel, The Great Circle, travel as self-discovery

*Elisa Pesce (she/her) is a Year 3 PhD student in English Literature at the University of Glasgow. Her research project investigates the reasons underlying the omission of women from models of fictional maximalism by assessing the scope and implications of this literary mode in the framework of contemporary cultural production in the United States. Moreover, it correlates ongoing issues around minorities' discrimination to hegemonic standards of genre and canon formation, demonstrating their connection to questions of power. Elisa has published in JAm It! (Journal of American Studies in Italy) and presented her research outputs at various international conferences. In April 2022, she organized and chaired the International Panel "Fictional Maximalism and The Americas: New Voices, New Perspectives" for the Andrew Hook Centre for American Studies in Glasgow. She is currently a GTA at the University of Glasgow and a tutor for The Brilliant Club.*

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"RYE BREAD AND FRIENDSHIP: RUSSIAN FAMINE OF 1891–1892 AND AMERICAN RELIEF OFFICIALS' TRAVEL WRITING"

When European Russia was hit with crop failure and later famine in the winter of 1891–1892, Americans initiated extensive relief campaign, ranging from cash donations to sending five steamers to Russia with foodstuffs, wheat, and basic commodities alongside with relief officials whose task was to regulate and supervise relief distribution to famine-stricken areas in cooperation with the Russian government. Their reports and published notes on their visits to the Russian Empire became a noteworthy and distinctive source of the American image of Russia and its inhabitants. This presentation examines works of two relief officials. The first one is William Edgar (1856–1932), editor of the *Northwestern Miller* and one of the first Americans

to publicly call for relief. With cooperation from Minnesota's milling industry, State Governor William Merriam, as well as railway and transportation companies, he secured the steamer *Missouri* loaded with foodstuffs and sailed for Russia in March of 1892. Based on his trip he wrote *The Russian Famine of 1891 and 1892* (1893). The second one is Francis Reeves (1836–1922), a prominent banker who was commissioned by the Philadelphia Permanent Relief Committee to travel later in April-May on *Conemaugh*. He published his travel impressions in a book format 25 years later in *Russia Then and Now, 1892–1917* (1917), apparently due to the increasing cooperation between the two countries during World War I. Both relief administrators attended official welcoming ceremonies organized by the Russian government and inspected villages struggling with famine. They gave their personal views on causes of famine, efficiency of the Russian government in tackling it, and commented on the Russian peasantry and agricultural development. Both shared their opinions on other topics relevant to the image of Russia in the U.S., including the treatment of Russian Jews and the Russian exile system. Both authors personally visited Russia during its crisis and claimed authority on account of their eye-witness status while describing the "Other". In this capacity, they contributed to the discussion regarding prospects of Russian modernization and traits of Russian national character in American society.

Keywords: The Russian Empire, the United States, travel writing, The Russian famine of 1891–1892, relief officials

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“WHERE STORIES ARE ALIVE:  
TRAVELING INTO WOLVERINE’S TERRITORY  
IN EOWYN IVEY’S *TO THE BRIGHT EDGE OF THE WORLD*”

In 1885 Lieutenant Colonel Forrester explores the newly acquired territory of Alaska for the US government. His passion to see an unknown world clashes with the mission Forrester has received from his military superiors. How will he meet the dual challenge—as well as the moral dilemma—of navigating an older world that resists comprehension—a world he learns to respect—and mapping the terrain for potential military invasion? My analysis will thus attempt to foreground the manifold paradoxes of travel/narratives. Loosely based on Lieutenant Henry Tureman Allen’s historic exploration of the Tanana and Copper rivers, Ivey’s novel departs significantly from historical accuracy in order to bring the colonizing agenda of the government-sponsored exploration party into conversation with the individual perspectives and sensibilities of its members, exposed as they are to a world where old stories are alive and where nonhumans or not-quite humans are all agential beings. Employing anthropologist Viveiros de Castro’s theorization of Amerindian perspectivism, I want to argue that *To the Bright Edge of the World* decolonizes the genre of travel narratives as well as the experience of travelling between worlds.

Keywords: wolverine, Alaska, exploration, *To The Bright Edge of the World*

Małgorzata Poks, PhD is an assistant professor at the Institute of Literary Studies, Faculty of Humanities, at the University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland. Her main research interests include contemporary US American Literature, Indigenous Studies, Decoloniality, Critical Animal Studies, Thomas Merton’s late poetry. She is the author of an award-winning monograph *Thomas Merton and Latin America: a Consonance of Voices* (2006). Recently she published a Polish translation of Linda Hogan’s *A Woman Who Watches Over the World: A Native Memoir* (2021). Her monograph *Decolonial Animal Ethics in Linda Hogan’s Poetry and Prose* has been published by Routledge in July 2023.

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## “AMERICAN IDIOTS: PUNK, METAL AND PROTEST IN GEORGE W. BUSH’S AMERICA”

In 2002, System of a Down frontman Serj Tankian joined an increasingly vocal movement within the American alternative music scene by denouncing the presidency of George W. Bush. Tom Morello, of platinum selling bands Rage Against the Machine and Audioslave, agreed that Bush should be tried as a war criminal if the United States invaded Iraq. When the Iraq war did begin the following year, both men used their platform to create anti-war, anti-Bush music intended to galvanize the American public against what they felt was an unjust conflict. These are two examples of a larger anti-war sentiment during the Bush presidency within the subgenres of rock, punk and metal music. The social impact of these anti-Bush musical protests formed an integral part in the overarching anti-Bush movement across the United States. This paper assesses protest and dissent through the lens of popular culture in the early 2000s, as the United States stood at the cusp of a new era of online social media and activism. The methods used by the well-supported Punk Voter movement, led by NOFX’s ‘Fat’ Mike Burkett and Axis of Justice, run by Tankian and Morello, sought to sign up young, disaffected voters and promote awareness of government policy through activism and information broadcasts over the internet. These early examples of online protest will be analyzed, bringing together key themes of censorship, identity politics, social media and youthful distrust of politics.

Keywords: US History, Punk, Metal, Protest, Politics, Presidency

*Dr. Ben Quail is a historian of US social and foreign policy, whose scholarship focuses on the role of the media in portraying war to the American people. His first monograph, *Selling Guns and Butter: Media Management in the Age of Lyndon Johnson*, was published by Palgrave MacMillan in December 2021. It investigates the relationship between the media, Vietnam and the Presidency of Lyndon B. Johnson, and is particularly interested in the reasons behind the erosion of Johnson’s credibility over the course of his time in office. More broadly, his interests lie in the history of American foreign relations over the past sixty years, and the propaganda of military engagements with a particular interest in the cultural impact of Vietnam*

on the American national consciousness. He is also keenly interested in Pacific relations, particularly between the US President and the Australian prime minister. Australia remains one of the United States' key allies in the Pacific world and a staunch military ally of the United States, as shown by the recent AUKUS trilateral agreement between the two countries and the United Kingdom. His research connects the Australian-American military and political alliance with significant personalities who have guided this throughout its recent history, for example, Prime Minister Harold Holt and President Johnson. He is also interested in the modern cultural history of warfare in the United States and further afield, particularly depictions of warfare and veterans in music, film, video games and comic books. His most recent research article, "American Idiots: Charting Protest and Activism in the Alternative Music Scene During the Presidency of George W. Bush," published in the *International Journal of Comparative American Studies* in 2021, is concerned with this strand of research.

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"YANKEES IN CANADA AND GRINGOS IN MEXICO:  
REVISITING FOUNDATIONAL WORKS  
OF HEMISPHERIC US LITERARY STUDY"

This paper provides a survey of literary criticism that informs the area we now call hemispheric American studies. The works revisited here consider the literary and cultural relationship between the US and Canada, or between the US and Mexico, through fiction and non-fiction by US authors. Often engaging with expatriate writings and travel narratives, they take a bibliographic approach and consider a vast number of literary works in their analyses. Among the earliest bibliographies compiled on the literary representation of North America is *America in Fiction: An Annotated List of Novels that Interpret Aspects of Life in the United States, Canada, and Mexico*, by Otis W. Coan and Richard G. Lillard, which was revised and republished five times between 1941 and 1967. That volume and its emphasis on literary setting is in many ways a prelude to the larger constellation of bibliographic research, primary source collections and book-length critical analyses from subsequent decades. These include works by Drewey Wayne Gunn and Edward Simmen (both of whom wrote on Mexico), Cecil Robinson (who included the US Southwest alongside Mexico), and James Doyle (whose focus was on Canada). There is a wealth of material contained

in these volumes and subsequent generations of scholars have made significant contributions based upon these works. In part, then, this paper is an homage to these early studies. At the same time, this paper serves as a sort of progress report on an ongoing project dedicated to expanding these bibliographies to include works from the late-twentieth century through our present moment. In doing so, the engagement with foundational works of criticism builds upon the longer tradition of US literary study and better equipped to consider the patterns and themes found across the literary representations of local, regional, national, and continental dynamics of North America. In this way, the current project works toward an analysis of US literary representations of both Canada and Mexico, identifying as many contrasts as congruencies from over two-hundred years of literature.

Keywords: American Studies; American Literature; Mexico; Canada; Travel Literature; Landscape Studies

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“REIMAGINING CHEROKEE DIASPORA  
IN INDIGENOUS SPECULATIVE FICTION: A COMPARATIVE  
ANALYSIS OF BLAKE HAUSMAN’S *RIDING THE TRAIL OF TEARS*  
AND DANIEL HEATH JUSTICE’S *THE WAY OF THORN AND THUNDER*”

Speculative fiction is an emerging and significant trend in North American Indigenous literature, providing Indigenous writers with a narrative framework to address the legacy of removal and envision decolonized futures. This article examines the reworkings of Indigenous diaspora in two Cherokee speculative fiction novels:

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Blake Hausman's "Riding the Trail of Tears" (2011) and Daniel Heath Justice's "The Way of Thorn and Thunder" (2011). Both authors, as citizens of the Cherokee Nation, grapple with the forced removal of their peoples to Oklahoma in the nineteenth century. Hausman's novel employs virtual reality, allowing him to reimagine the trauma of the Cherokee Trail of Tears while acknowledging the enduring impact of historical narratives in contemporary society. Justice's fantasy novel unfolds in the Everland, a richly imagined universe inhabited by non-human "Folk" whose lands are threatened by "human" settlers. The Folk's story closely mirrors events in Cherokee history, disrupting settler fantasies of legitimacy and supremacy while imbuing Indigenous fantasies with a decolonial imperative. This paper focuses on how these Indigenous novels revisit the sci-fi and fantasy Western genres, offering alternative accounts of resistance in the face of forced migration. Ultimately, this study demonstrates that while referencing the past, these stories empower Indigenous futures and challenge Western notions of Indigenous people as ahistorical and static

Keywords: Indigenous speculative fiction, Indigenous literature, Cherokee Trail of Tears, Cherokee literature, Daniel Heath Justice, Blake Hausman, decolonization.

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"INDIGENOUS PHILOSOPHIES, KNOWLEDGES AND THEORIES  
IN MOTION: TRANSATLANTIC EXCHANGES BETWEEN CANADIAN  
INDIGENOUS AND UPPER SILESIAN SCHOLARS,  
ARTISTS AND STUDENTS"

The paper reflects on the developments in scholarship and educational activities in the last two decades at the University of Silesia (Poland), which resulted from transatlantic encounters and relationship building between Indigenous and Upper Silesian writers/scholars/artists and stu-



dents. The travelling of ideas took place via diverse embodied physical, as well as online and textual contacts, via workshops, lectures, conferences and many educational projects. I focus on the topic of knowledge transfer which challenges mainstream Eurocentric worldviews while introducing Indigenous knowledges and philosophies aiming at holistic eco-centric and kincentric perspectives; they have led to a gradual re-indigenization of Upper Silesia, to our remembering/reclaiming and relearning of Slavic indigeneity of this region, and to challenging the major historical national communist and other colonial narratives imposed on this land. I use the concept of “indigeneity” as a critical tool which helps me to look at the Upper Silesian expressions of culture as Indigenous to historical Upper Silesia. I draw on the broad understanding of “indigeneity” as proposed by Floyd Favel, Cree artist-scholar, for whom indigeneity is an inclusive concept grounded in a core Indigenous value, which is “we are all interrelated”, and our cultures are places of hospitality and responsibility for the Other.

Keywords: travelling knowledges and philosophies, knowledge transfer, indigeneity, Indigenous cultures, minority cultures, Upper Silesia, re-indigenization, Indigenous expressions of culture

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“MOVING WITH AND ON THE TURTLE ISLAND: INDIGENOUS ACTIVIST AND ARTISTIC EXPRESSIONS IN NORTH AMERICA AS COUNTER-MAPPING PRACTICES.” (ON-SITE)

Indigenous Peoples have expressed, remembered and performed spatial orientation, imaginations and relations as part of their various movements across the Turtle Island (the North American

continent according to some Indigenous nation's creation stories), including migration, trading, hunting, gathering and also the forced displacement of Indigenous Peoples from their ancestral lands to reserves. Gwilym Lucas Eades' (2016) research demonstrates how Indigenous communities understand spatial imagination and use maps and digital media to express their cultural identity, reclaim land and assert their sovereignty, tell stories, transmit cultural knowledge, and counter colonial narratives through "counter-mapping" showing the essence of one's spatial awareness. In the context of this study, I understand "counter-mapping" as a form of activism against dominant power structures to restore the voices and perspectives of Indigenous nations that oppose Western notions of place and spatial imagination and question the arbitrarily imposed by colonization borders between different areas on earth, between people and between nature and man. I refer to the protest walk in 2013 initiated by David Kawapit, known as the Journey of *Nishiyuu* or the Journey of the People, a 1,600-kilometer journey of a group of young Cree walkers from Whapmagoostui, Quebec to Parliament Hill in Ottawa to support the Idle no More movement as a contemporary activist expression through journeying. I look at the traveling art installation project *Walking With Our Sisters* honoring the lives of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Canada to demonstrate how Indigenous artists bridge the walking and traveling experience with healing for the community. Finally, discussing Indigenous performances such as *Frost Exploding Trees Moon*, a solo performance choreographed by Michelle Olson and Floyd Favel and performed by Olson and Floyd Favel's land-based research in the development of an Indigenous theatre methodology the Native Performance Culture (NPC), I present how Indigenous performers draw from travel stories and nomadic experiences of their ancestors to establish contemporary artistic expressions as forms of resistance to colonial narratives. Eventually, I conclude how these Indigenous activist and artistic performances of journeying become counter-mapping practices offering decolonial mapping of the Turtle Island as well as embodied healing.

Keywords: Indigenous performance, activism, stories, counter-mapping, journeying, healing

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“DO YOU THINK OF GOING TO AMERICA?’ I ASKED. ‘I DO,’ SAID HE’:  
THE RAJA AND THE PRINCE AND WORDS THAT TRAVEL,  
OR ON NOT TRAVELLING TO AMERICA”

In 1845 Dwarkanath Tagore said to the author J. Dix, “I was going to America two years ago but that Dickens book frightened me and I did not go”, but that he planned to go the following year. To both Dwarkanath Tagore (1794-1846) and his friend Raja Rammohun Roy (1772-1833) America was a site of fascination and possibilities. Although ultimately neither travelled to America as they died of illness in Paris and Bristol respectively, the significance of the freedom America suggested was a driving curiosity out with the strictures of Anglo-Indian cultural spaces they inhabited. In this paper, Dr. Simpson discusses the transnational reputation of Raja Rammohun Roy and Prince Dwarkanath Tagore and how important their willingness to travel was to that reputation. It evidences how travel and these men’s desire and ability to travel was evidence of their cultural uniqueness. Travelling within, between, and projecting beyond the histories and the cultures of India and Britain, they evidence the very epitome of Bhabha’s incommensurabil-

ity: residing in physical spaces which their religious culture saw as inappropriate and explicitly moving in the opposite direction to the usual known and narrated paths of travel in the nineteenth century. Their very willingness to travel to America and their vocality about such willingness evidenced their seeing themselves as part of a shared global community. Thus, in this paper travel to America is situated as a longing, bound up in political, aesthetic, religious and cosmopolitan desire. Dr Simpson will further discuss how the concept of travel to America was engaged in by both men as a way to resist and challenge colonial British rule.

Keywords: Cosmopolitan, Bengal Renaissance, Transcultural, Education, Religion

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“MYTHS OF MODERN AMERICA: THE RISE OF THE AMERICAN PÍCARO AND THE DECLINE OF THE AMERICAN DREAM”

In this paper, I will examine the history of picaresque writing in North American literature and consider how the picaresque model both plays into and interrogates the notion of the American Dream. Taking *The Memoirs of the Notorious Stephen Burroughs*, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, and *The Adventures of Augie March* as examples, I will explore how the American picaresque novel has evolved over three centuries to reflect changing understandings of the American Dream. In 1895, William Dean Howells

proposed that “the intending author of American fiction would do well to study the Spanish picaresque novels; for in their simplicity of design he will find one of the best forms for an American story.” Indeed, there are strong parallels between the picaresque myth and the myth of the American Dream: both are based upon a narrative of social mobility achieved through personal effort regardless of the circumstances of one’s birth. I will show that as belief in the American Dream changed over time, the nature of American picaresque writing also changed to reflect this. By analyzing texts by Burroughs, Twain, and Bellow, I will show that the American picaresque myth began to diverge from its European roots, and that a distinctly American picaresque myth had emerged by the twentieth century. Despite the prominence of picaresque writing in American letters (and notably in several works widely considered to be classics of American literature), the notion of a uniquely American picaresque tradition has been disputed and underresearched. This paper presents a new perspective on the significance of picaresque writing in the American context, and reveals that the pícaro’s travels in North America have been his most transformative yet.

Keywords: American Picaresque Novel, Satire, History of the Novel

*Jessica Syers completed her PhD in Comparative Literature at the University of Edinburgh in 2022. Her doctoral thesis investigated the development of the neopicaresque novel in Europe and America during the mid-twentieth century, comparing eight examples from Britain, Germany, Spain, and the US in their original languages. Her wider research interests include the history of the novel, transatlantic literature, and comparative theory. She currently teaches German for research purposes at the University of Edinburgh, and has a leading role in IASA’s Emerging Scholars Forum*

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#### “A TRIP BACK TO HISTORY AND IDENTITY FORMATION IN *THE MARROW THIEVES*”

Cherie Dimaline’s *The Marrow Thieves* deals with post-apocalyptic era when the natural resources are scarce and polluted. By portraying climate crisis, Dimaline focuses on the plights, scars, and trauma that Indigenous people faced due to colonialism. By using the structure of ‘Story’ within story, she reminds

the reader of the continuation of the apocalypse till present day. By hearing the stories from the elders, the characters travel back to history and gather collective consciousness of what Indigenous people experienced throughout these decades. The elders experienced the trauma of the residential schools and they stand as first-hand witnesses of incidents. Through storytelling, they can survive and inform the following generation of the hazards. This paper intends to emphasize on storytelling and its importance in travelling back to history to shape individuality based on collective history. I will apply Judith Herman's trauma, and Dori Laub and Shoshana Felman's witnessing and testimony to *The Marrow Thieves* to emphasize that Dimaline invokes the past to focus on the apocalyptic present situation. The residential schools were shut down, but the new era of the residential schools is coming and the exploitation of lands and humans are still continuing. In order to survive, young Indigenous people need to learn about the past and keep their culture alive.

Keywords: history, story, identity formation, trauma

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#### “THE AMERICAS AND ITS VARIED REPRESENTATIONS ON SCREEN: HOLLYWOOD AND LATIN AMERICAN CINEMA IN CONTRAST”

The cinema of Hollywood has largely enjoyed the burden of creating the image of the Americas and the West. The idea of the West, mostly surrounded around the United States represented as the land of 'all things important'. Themes of the Wild West, the Frontier Myth, and the American Dream, have all found spaces in the cinema of Hollywood. However, these ideas

that most films engage with are central to the geographical space of the United States. In fact, these films create an identity of the Americas and the West, with the United States as an archetype, in retrospect to the identity of their counterparts. Hollywood's capitalist tendencies and its role in creating narratives that are central to a particular demographic has hence earned it the recognition of 'First Cinema'. In contrast, Latin American cinema, which primarily constitutes films from Latin-speaking countries including Argentina, Brazil, and Cuba, has manifested the seeds of activism and realistic representation in the cinematic artform. As a direct anti-thesis to Hollywood, Latin American cinema with its most significant movement of 'Third Cinema', pioneered by Getino and Solanas, focused on representing a varied image of the Americas and has hence moulded the idea of the West. What differentiates the Latin American cinema movement is not only its role in recognizing the culture of the largely unexplored and ignored Americas, but also the fact that it provided a liberal space for the cinema of the 'Third World' to establish a chain of representation that is primarily rooted in their respective cultures. This study shall, therefore, be an attempt to analyze both Hollywood and Latin American cinema in contrast, to understand their characteristics and explore their socio-political associations. The study shall analyze varied representations of the Americas on screen and how it extends to the process of creating an idea of the West. Considering the fact that Hollywood as well as Latin American cinema have widespread transcontinental recognition, the study shall attempt a dialogic understanding of both in their role of creating and moulding images and identities across continents.

Keywords: Americas, First Cinema, Hollywood, Latin American cinema, Third Cinema, West/Western

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*Shyam Benegal, Utpal Dutt, and Govind Nihalani. As a literary film scholar, Ishtiaque is keen on exploring the politics behind the process of filmmaking and how the representations on screen negotiate with reality to create varied images of the society. Ishtiaque has been associated with IASA as a part of the local organizing committee in the 10th IASA World Congress at GGSIPU, New Delhi where he also presented a paper analyzing caste system in India and racism in the United States with reference to films of Nihalani and Sembene. He has been nominated as a member of the International Organizing Committee at the 11th IASA World Congress at Katowice, Poland. He is also a part of the IASA Emerging Scholars Forum. Profiles: <https://ggsipu.academia.edu/AhmadIshtiaqueTapadar> <https://www.linkedin.com/in/ishtiaque-ahmad-531b16230/>*

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#### “WRITINGS OF A FRENCH TRAVELER ON 19TH CENTURY BRAZIL: COLONIALISM AND GENDER IN ROSE DE FREYCINET’S *JOURNALS*”

Rose-Marie Pinon, a French woman of the 19th century, accompanied her husband, a ship captain, on his travels, which was uncommon at the time. She joined the Uranie expedition between 1817 and 1820, which was one of the first French expeditions to circumnavigate the globe. Despite the restriction of women boarding state ships without special permission from the king, Rose-Marie was on board for the entire duration of the journey. She kept a journal of her travels, which is notable for its informal tone and expression of free thought, and which consists of personal letters addressed to her mother and her cousin, Caroline de Nanteuil. The journal has been published in French in 1927 and translated into Portuguese in 2013. The Brazilian translation of the journal has been the subject of this presentation, which examines the challenges of translating a foreign text from a colonial period, with its prejudices and biases, into the 21st century. The presentation draws on the theoretical framework of Aimé Césaire’s view of colonialism, Françoise Simonet-Tenant’s perspective on 19th century women favoring letters as a medium for literature, and Antoine Berman’s theory of ethnocentrism and translation.

Keywords: 19th century Brazil; French travelers; Brazilian Translation; Colonialism; French women travelers

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“HUMANITARIAN TRAVELERS: AMERICAN RED CROSS CLUB-MOBILE SERVICE GIRLS IN EUROPEAN COMBAT ZONES DURING WORLD WAR II”

In December 1941 the United States of America entered the World War II. In the meantime, American Red Cross mobilized its crew to provide medical relief and morale-boosting services, both in the home front and in the war theaters. Among these morale-boosting services in war theatres were American Red Cross clubs. They were first stationed in Great Britain, Scotland, and Ireland, and eventually branched out in all over the war theaters in a few months. In 1942, Harvey D. Gibson was appointed the commissioner of the American Red Cross in Great Britain and without any delay he introduced the Clubmobile Service. His idea was a club on wheels with three American Red Cross girls, baking doughnuts, cooking coffee and driving from one station to another to bring “home” to the American soldiers at the very border of the front-line. Gibson claimed that “this humble brown object of sweetened dough” was not just a diet; for Gibson, “served by cheerful Red Cross girls, it was also ammunition; ammunition for the heart and spirit.” American Red Cross Clubmobile girls established the American culture at the European theater of World War II

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to build morale of the American soldiers at the battle ground. They managed to build “home” at the front-lines and reminded the American soldiers that they had not been forgotten. This paper, though, scrutinizes not the “home” they built in the “war” zone but what has been mostly neglected by historians; the “war” these American girls brought “home.” The club-mobile work created an interaction between home and war in this sense. ARC girls traveling in the clubmobiles every day, from one station to another, experienced the war at first hand. They wrote letters and travel journals, and, years after the war, memoirs in which they talked about the actual battle. With these personal writings they actually created a new memory of World War II. This new memory acted as “alternate dimensions to cultural memory that do not conform to the grand narratives of the war.” With their writings of “war,” these ARC girls, “whose experiences of war challenges those more familiar accounts of warfare” brought a new dimension of war to home and “broaden our perspectives of the war to include the experience of others—non-combatants and women”

Keywords: American Red Cross, Clubmobile Service, Humanitarian Travelers, Combat Zone Travelers, Cultural Memory

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## “THE MEMORY OF JOHN PAUL JONES IN COLD WAR US-UK/SCOTTISH RELATIONS”

John Paul Jones was a Scotsman turned American revolutionary who commanded a US fleet against the British Royal Navy on the high seas in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Despite his controversial past, Jones' figure and memory served as a symbolic plank in the Anglo-US relations of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. By 1947 the US Congress had established the John Paul Jones Bicentennial Commission to orchestrate anniversary celebrations, including official events in Scotland. In 1953, a plaque was unveiled at Jones' birthplace in Scotland by the Navy and the Daughters of the American Revolution. In 1959, Hollywood finally premiered its film *John Paul Jones*, a movie that had been in various stages of production—and periodic international political controversy—since the 1930s. From the 1950s, the United States Navy regularly took groups of officers from its ships in port at Leith, Scotland, on training and goodwill visits to Jones' birthplace in Arbigland in Dumfries and Galloway. Such transatlantic commemorations served not only the US government's domestic agendas, but also a realignment in early Cold War Anglo-American relations. Memory diplomacy continued with the Bicentennial of the American Revolution in 1976, by which point the rise of Scottish nationalism served to complicate representations of Jones's overlapping Scottish-ness, British-ness, and American-ness. Combining approaches from Memory Studies, Performance Studies, the Blue Humanities and Transoceanic American Studies, this paper will analyze how John Paul Jones' memory was appropriated by various local, national and transnational actors for use in their international relations in the Cold War, at a time of reasserting their transatlantic alliance in the face of supreme geopolitical competition. In this sense, the United States and United Kingdom imposed their current Cold War framework of their particular geopolitical alliance on the memory of a figure who in his own time frequently subverted national categories and allegiances by turning 'traitor' to Britain and becoming an American 'patriot' (as well as subsequently serving in Russia). Thus, Cold War American and British diplomacy (with a more subtle

but distinct Scottish participation) co-constructed a shared maritime heritage for the purposes of their transatlantic alliance.

Keywords: Transatlantic relations, Memory, Cold War

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#### “THE NOMADIC THOUGHT IN THE AUTO/BIOGRAPHIES OF EVERETT RUESS”

Everett Ruess (1914–1934) was an American artist and poet who traveled in the American Southwest until he disappeared in the deserts of the area in 1934. Ruess was documenting his experiences and observations in his journals and artworks as well as the letters he was sending to his family and friends during his travels. It is evident from his accounts that Ruess had a passion for being in solitude and wilderness, which on several occasions he is reported to have preferred over civilization and people. While Ruess’s disappearance in Davis Gulch in the desert Southwest still remains a mystery, his short life has inspired several people such as W. L. Rusho, as seen in his books *Everett Ruess: A Vagabond for Beauty* (1985) and *The Mystery of Everett Ruess* (2010), Philip L. Fradkin in his book *Everett Ruess: His Short Life, Mysterious Death, and Astonishing Afterlife* (2011), and finally David Roberts in his book *Finding Everett Ruess* (2011). In these travel narratives, the authors try to uncover the mysterious journeys of Everett Ruess and his sense of wilderness aesthetics that attracted him to the deserts so much so that this passion claimed his life at the age of twenty. While this sense of aesthetics can be connected to the Transcendentalist philosophy of the 19<sup>th</sup> century which saw the ultimate belief in nature and wilderness, Ruess’s

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love of the natural world and taking refuge in it can also be seen as a pilgrimage that has a transformative power on his understanding of art, artistic creation, and the political consciousness that these already incorporated. This paper aims to trace this nomadic thought and aesthetic understanding that is developed in the narratives on and about Everett Ruess by different authors through the “nomadic thought” as introduced and developed by the French thinkers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in their several books. Everett Ruess’s life and travels in the desert show that he turns into a nomad per se, situates himself and his art against the state (apparatus), and defines a life of his own outside the social and political constraints of the time.

Keywords: Everett Ruess, travel narrative, biography, wilderness, nomadic thought

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## “FINDING THE AMERICAS IN ANDALUSIAN MUSIC”

In 2019 I travelled to Seville to be with local friends there during the *Semana Santa* (Holy Week) festivities. I was surprised to see and hear what looked to me like literal rivers of musicians! Marching bands accompanied the Saints’ floats during the processions, and the entire city was full of music all day and all night. This experience marked the beginning of my fieldwork in Andalusia, and particularly in Seville, where I have been studying religious organizations and the music bands connected to them during the year. During this time I have found that today’s Andalusian music, from Flamenco to pop music and marching band songs

in religious processions, have been greatly impacted by the music coming from the Americas. This paper is my first exploration of this connection.

Keywords: Americas, music, Americas, Spain, Andalusia

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## “A TRANSMODERN TRAVELOGUE?

### THE CASE OF TEJU COLE’S *EVERY DAY IS FOR THE THIEF*”

Transmodernity blurs many of the binary oppositions that had hitherto been used to describe the realities around us, emphasizing that “no one becomes the permanent center or persistent periphery” (Alcoff 63). After a long period of having been purposefully left “outside of modernity” (Dussel 49), we are now witnessing the amalgamation of so-called peripheral cultures with Western ones as a direct consequence of globalization. Insofar as it aims to transcend “the Western epistemic,” Transmodernity puts forward “a way of being human that transcends the modern world-system and generates its own ways of seeing and thinking” (Kuecker 163). These distinct ways of seeing and thinking have been notably channeled through narratives that underscore the multilayered and often contradictory nature of the reality we inhabit. One of those narratives is *Every Day Is for the Thief* (2007), the first novel written by Nigerian-American author Teju Cole. In it, an unnamed character travels from the United States to visit his native Lagos after a fifteen-year absence. Throughout his journey, the narrator experiences what it is like to be back in a city that has changed dramatically in many aspects yet remains

unaltered in many others. This paper seeks to read Cole's novel as a transmodern take on the travelogue format, more specifically through the concept of "narratives of fracture" (Rodríguez Magda). These narratives run counter to the hegemonic discourse, seeking to push "traditional genre boundaries and ontological frameworks" (Aliaga-Lavrijsen and Yebra-Pertusa 9). Despite lacking a straightforward critique to the downsides of globalization, the novel manages to capture the latent violence that threatens to rip through reality at any given moment, hence revealing "the cracks through which barbarism leaks" (Rodríguez Magda 29). The grim realities of modern-day Lagos overlap with the sudden emergence of a past that had hitherto remained hidden from sight, only to corroborate that the interplay of globalizing forces continue and expand other historical forms of oppression such as slavery or the unchallenged "official history" of military regimes. Thus, *Every Day Is for the Thief* brings the contradictions of modern Nigerian society to the fore, underscoring the myriad, contradictory forces at play in the transmodern city.

Keywords: Teju Cole; Transmodernity; globalization; narratives of fracture; unreliable narrator

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“THE DICHOTOMY OF STRUGGLE AND INDEPENDENCE  
IN TRANSATLANTIC IMMIGRATIONS: RESHAPING HISTORICAL  
NARRATIVES FOR THE MARGINALIZED GENDER  
IN *THE GODS OF TANGO* BY CAROLINA DE ROBERTIS”

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the first wave of Italian immigration to Argentina occurred, where they took up agricultural, industrial and construction work, started small businesses and trades, and worked as professionals as well. The historical narratives mostly included men and their contributions in Argentina during these transoceanic immigrations. Women mostly travelled to accompany their husbands. Carolina de Robertis, an Uruguayan-American writer in *The Gods of Tango* (2015) re-creates history using her non-linear, gender inclusive, and essentially feminine writing to challenge the narratives that excluded experiences of women. The paper explores the journey of a woman who travels all the way from Italy to Argentina to accompany her husband, only to hear the news of his demise. She has a choice to either go back to Italy in the conservative society she doesn't identify with or stay in Argentina and face what might come. She chooses the latter, and finds herself in *nepantla* (theory by Gloria Anzaldúa), a liminal space where the change takes place but not easily. The paper aims to study the challenges that came with transoceanic immigrations for women who struggled alone in a male dominant society. It maps Leda's experiences, where she has to cross-dress as a man to fulfil her dream to play Tango and to ensure her safety. She finds herself crossing the rigid gender lines constructed by the patriarchal society, and in the process finds her identity. It studies the liberties and prohibitions that the new land offers for the marginalized gender, and how they deal with it to even turn the adversity in their favour. The paper will use various theories like *nepantla* and Coyolxauhqui imperative by Gloria Anzaldúa, *curdling* by María Lugones, *neobarroco* by Nestor Perlongher; and feminist theories by Judith Butler and Hélène Cixous.

Keywords: transoceanic, transatlantic, immigration, marginalised gender, queer theory, feminism, Argentina, Italy, *Nepantla*, *Curdling*

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“‘TRAVELERS BY NECESSITY’:  
RUTH BEHAR ON THE WAY IN SEARCH FOR ROOTS OR HOME”

Ruth Behar begins her memoir *Travelling Heavy* (2013) with the following citation “I love to travel. But I’m also terrified of traveling.” Then she describes her various good luck rituals she performs before starting a journey and links them to her Jewish ancestry. And although she calls herself a professional traveler, she also describes herself as a “an anthropologist who specializes in homesickness,” which perfectly reveals the contradictions related to the notion of travelling. As a relatively new phenomenon, available and affordable to few, travelling can be an exciting, desired and adventurous experience that opens us up to diversity and enriches us. At the same time since it involves meeting with the Other it can be a threatening and exhausting incident that causes nostalgia for home. Hence, the journey is an existential experience including the change, the philosophical exploration of oneself, search for and dissemination of knowledge, and a sense of discovery (actual of places and communities and symbolical of cultural values and ideas). In this presentation I am going to analyze Behar’s writings as narratives representing fictitious fragments of experienced or/and imagined realities (*Letters from Cuba* 2020) vs. non-fictional dimension of memoir or travel writing (*Travelling Heavy* 2013). Still, what joins the two types of narratives is the issue of memory—how/what do we remember? How are our memories changing depending on time and person we relate them to? Are we dealing here with imaginary America (in search of greener/safer pastures) or imaginary dias-

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pora (in search of ethnic roots) or imaginary homeland? And where and what is home then?

Keywords: diaspora, home, travel, feminist memoir, memory

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