

11th INTERNATIONAL SAAS CONFERENCE

“TRANS-”:

The Poetics and Politics of Crossing in the US



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INFORME DEL PRESIDENTE

Estimadas/os colegas:

Durante este año 2012, como sucede desde que SAAS inició la celebración bienal de sus congresos, los miembros de la Junta Directiva hemos mantenido reuniones con el comité organizador del próximo Congreso, que se celebrará en La Laguna (20-22 de marzo de 2013), además de atender a la gestión de las diversas labores de la asociación (becas, contactos con la Embajada de los Estados Unidos y la Comisión Fulbright, publicación del boletín, etc.). En el momento de escribir estas líneas, la preparación del próximo congreso está avanzada y continúa abierto el plazo para el envío de propuestas para los 19 paneles que ya fueron aceptados en su día. Me permito recordar a quienes ya hayan recibido confirmación de la aceptación de su propuesta, que la fecha límite para entregar la contribución completa al coordinador del panel es el 10 de febrero de 2013.

Ya tenemos confirmada la presencia como conferenciantes plenarios en La Laguna de la escritora Karen Tei Yamashita, y de nuestra compañera Isabel Durán (Universidad Complutense). El Comité Organizador local, presidido por el profesor Juan Ignacio Oliva, está haciendo las gestiones oportunas para poder contar con un tercer conferenciante cuya obra guarde relevancia con la temática general de nuestro Congreso.

En la Asamblea Ordinaria del día 7 de mayo de 2012, celebrada en la Universidad Complutense gracias a la colaboración, una vez más, de Isabel Durán, se discutieron temas referidos al próximo Congreso, así como a la resolución de la Beca SAAS-Instituto Franklin, la situación de la *Revista de Estudios Norteamericanos* y del Boletín. Vaya nuestro agradecimiento a la Vicepresidenta de SAAS, Carme Manuel, por su excelente labor en la preparación de este Boletín. También me gustaría agradecer de nuevo al director del Instituto Franklin, José Antonio Gurpegui, la colaboración y el esfuerzo que han permitido sacar adelante este número del Boletín.

En la Asamblea General de este año también tuvimos ocasión de presentar, debatir, y finalmente aprobar las normas reguladoras de los nuevos premios de investigación. La nueva normativa se encuentra disponible a través de la página web de la asociación, y la publicamos también en las páginas de este boletín. Quiero desde aquí animar a los socios a enviar sus propuestas para estos premios. La convocatoria se mantiene abierta hasta el 15 de enero de 2013.

Un cordial saludo.

Espero que podamos vernos en La Laguna en marzo.

Jesús Benito
Universidad de Valladolid

Queridos colegas y amigos,

Una vez más el Instituto Franklin-UAH colabora con SAAS en la edición de este boletín; y de nuevo su Presidente me brinda la oportunidad de poder dirigirme a los socios de esta asociación para informar sobre las actividades desarrolladas en los últimos 12 meses en el instituto de todos los americanistas españoles.

Para quienes en él trabajamos e investigamos el año que ahora concluye ha sido especialmente singular al tratarse del 25 aniversario de la creación del entonces CENUAH (Centro de Estudios Norteamericanos de la Universidad de Alcalá) en 1987, y que en el 2001 se convirtió en Instituto Universitario de Investigación (Decreto 15/2001 de 1 de febrero; BOCM 8 de febrero del 2001, nº 33, p.10). Este acontecimiento tan espacial e irreplicable ha marcado las acciones y actuaciones del “Franklin”, como familiarmente lo denominamos. El acontecimiento más sobresaliente fue, sin duda, la ceremonia de entrega del Galardón “Camino Real”, para reconocer a aquellos españoles que han potenciado y prestigiado la imagen de nuestro país en los Estados Unidos. En esta primera edición el galardonado fue D. Plácido Domingo, quien recibió una escultura, representando la campana que jalonaba el discurrir del Camino Real por tierras norteamericanas, de manos de S.A.R. D. Felipe de Borbón.

También fue este un año especial para los americanistas al tratarse de un año electoral en los Estados Unidos. El Instituto Franklin se convirtió en el referente español para los medios de comunicación de nuestro país. Investigadores del instituto participaron en programas de 9 cadenas de televisión (Informe Semanal, Noche electoral en TVE y Telemadrid, Informativos de La Sexta... etc.), en casi una veintena de emisoras de radio (Ser, Onda Cero, Radio Nacional, ABC Punto Radio... etc.) y colaboraron con numerosos medios de prensa escrita y digital (El Mundo, La Razón, El Confidencial.com... etc.)

Pero además de estas actuaciones puntuales, el Instituto ha continuado con la rutina del resto de sus actividades. En la última convocatoria de proyectos de investigación hemos podido incrementar la cifra respecto al 2011, llegando a una cantidad próxima a los 200.000€, de los que 50.000€ se han dedicado a subvencionar proyectos de jóvenes investigadores. En la colección de la “Biblioteca Benjamin Franklin” hemos publicado 4 nuevos títulos. La recepción de los tres congresos internacionales organizados ha sido muy positiva, con un número de asistentes próximo a los 400. Deseo destacar de forma muy especial el Congreso Internacional de Literatura Chicana, celebrado en Toledo en colaboración con la Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha. Seguro que el del 2014, el noveno, que se celebrará en la Universidad de Oviedo volverá a ser un éxito. Mencionar por último las tres exposiciones fotográficas que hemos organizado: “Las Relaciones Bilaterales entre Estados Unidos y España a través de la lente de la cámara: El fondo fotográfico de la Embajada de Estados Unidos (1953-1975) en la UAH” (con los fondos del propio Instituto); “Murales Chicanos del suroeste de Estados Unidos (1972-2000)” (colección privada de Annick Treguer); Tinta, sangre y vino: Hemingway en España. (en colaboración con Bodegas Paternina). Estas exposiciones están a disposición de las universidades o asociaciones que pudieran estar interesadas. Y por último, en el apartado dedicado a la docencia, estamos trabajando para poder ofrecer en el futuro, el primer Programa de Master y de Doctorado interuniversitario en Estudios Norteamericanos en España. No puedo despedirme sin agradecer a la actual junta directiva de SAAS –como a las anteriores- la disposición para colaborar con el Instituto Franklin. Ellos, como todos vosotros, podréis contar conmigo, en el futuro, para cuantos proyectos puedan surgir en nuestro ámbito de investigación.

En esta ocasión, un fuerte abrazo,

José Antonio Gurpegui
Director Instituto Franklin-UAH

11th INTERNATIONAL SAAS CONFERENCE

“TRANS-”: The Poetics and Politics of Crossing in the US



Universidad de La Laguna (Tenerife)
March 20-22, 2013

Transcending roles and borders, as well as physical and mental boundaries, has always been a primary motif in the narrative of the United States of America. Coming across the “Other”—either by pioneering into new territories, traveling East & West, South & North; or by colonizing/contacting/contesting other cultures, languages, identities—has resulted in complex and problematic experiences of crossing. The 11th SAAS International Conference, to be held at La Laguna University, Tenerife, aims at exploring those transits in order to understand the American practice of transgressing limits and crossing real and metaphorical, political and cultural borderlands. Some issues that could be addressed are the following:

A) Transnational: Border crossings; inter- & multi- Nations; Geo- & Supra- Nations; dis- & post-locations; political subsidiarity; global, local, & “glocal” places.

B) Transliterary: Trans-genre; trans-mediality; literary “exhaustion;” e-books; trans-lations; computerizing literature; cyber-palimpsests: reusing and recycling documents; trans-publishing.

C) Transgender: Transcending gender roles; androgyny; trans-sexuality; /hetero/bi/homo/pan/poly/a/-sexual normativities; “post-genderism.”

D) Transhuman: Cyborgs and ultra-humans; “transSci-fi”; post-anthropocentrism; dialogues and disruptions between humans and non-humans; environmental & toxic discourses; transgenic foods; human-made catastrophes.

PLENARY SPEAKERS

Karen Tei Yamashita. She is a Japanese American writer and Associate Professor of Literature at University of California, Santa Cruz, where she teaches creative writing and Asian American literature. Her works, several of which contain elements of magic realism, include novels *I Hotel* (2010), *Circle K Cycles* (2001), *Tropic of Orange* (1997), *Brazil-Marú* (1992), and *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest* (1990). Tei Yamashita's novels emphasize the necessity of polyglot, multicultural communities in an increasingly globalized age, even as they destabilize orthodox notions of borders and national/ethnic identity. She has also written a number of plays, including *Hannah Kusoh*, *Noh Bozos* and *O-Men* which was produced by the Asian American theatre group, East West Players. Yamashita was a finalist for the 2010 National Book Award. In 2011 she was named a Fellow of United States Artists.

Isabel Durán (Universidad Complutense, Madrid). She is Professor of American Literature at the Department of English, Complutense University in Madrid (Spain). She was the Associate Dean of the School of Philology (2006-2010) and Coordinator for the Humanities at the El Escorial Summer Courses. She was Vice-president of SAAS (Spanish Association for American Studies) until 2009, and a member of the General Council of ASA (American Studies Association) from 2008 to 2011. Her research and publication record on gender studies, literature, autobiography and ethnicity include the edition of a seven-volume Women's Studies collection (the last one being *Diferencia, (des)igualdad y justicia / Differences, (In)Equality and Justice*. Madrid: Fundamentos, 2010), following her book *Autobiography: Female Versions in 20th Century American Literature* (in Spanish). She is also the co-editor of the book *Miradas Transatlánticas /Transatlantic Vistas: Cultural Exchanges between Europe and the US* (Madrid: Fundamentos, 2011). She is at present working on a book about contemporary American autobiography, and is doing research on Latina/o and Chicana/o literature, as part of a research team. She leads a Research Project entitled “Domestic Topographies in the Feminine Imaginary: a Comparative, Transnational and Hemispheric Vision”. She is the coordinator of a web site in Spanish on American Literature (<http://www.Liceus.com>), and was the Program Chair of the *Women's Worlds Congress* (Madrid, July 2008).

LIST OF PANELS

1) Trans-textuality in American Literature, Film, and Culture

Panel Chair: Jesús Ángel González

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The term “transtextuality” was proposed by Gérard Genette to refer to “all that which puts one text in relation, whether obvious or concealed, with other texts” (1). It is based on Mikhail Bakhtin’s concepts of “dialogism” and “heteroglossia” and Julia Kristeva’s “intertextuality”, a term she used to refer to the “mosaic of citations” that constitute a text. Genette posited five types of transtextuality:

- Intertextuality: “the effective co-presence of two texts” in the form of quotation (explicit), plagiarism or allusion (implicit).
- Paratextuality: the relation between the text and its “paratext” (titles, prefaces, dedications...).
- Metatextuality: “the critical relationship par excellence”, this category refers to works where a text “makes comments” about another one.
- Hypertextuality is defined by Genette as the relationship between one text (the hypertext) to an anterior text (hypotext), which the former transforms or modifies.
- Architextuality refers to the generic taxonomies suggested or evoked by a text. Genette defines it as “the entire set of general or transcendent categories—types of discourse, modes of enunciation, literary genres—from which emerges each singular text”.

This panel seeks to analyze the different dimensions of transtextuality in the context of American Literature, Film and Culture. We welcome papers that address the crossings between texts, genres and media that have fertilized American Literature throughout its history, such as (but not restricted to) the following:

- Early transtextuality: the adaptation of European genres to the American context
- Media crossing: “Horizontal” (same media) versus “vertical” references (different media), or “intermedia reflexivity” (Ptr Szczepanik)
- Transtextuality and metafiction
- Transtextuality and post-modernism
- Transtextuality in American popular culture: television, comics, music
- Transtextuality in American cinema: adaptation or transwriting?

2) Crossing as Empowerment: the Boundaries of Theatrical Illusion

Panel Chair: Barbara Ozieblo

Institution: Universidad de Málaga

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The stage allows both the audience and the actor to transgress all boundaries, including those of gender, race, and reality. In fact, theater is most powerful when it does transgress accepted norms and expected patterns of behavior, shocking the audience out of its accustomed state of lethargy. This panel will examine the nature and effect of such power and how, why, and on whom it is bestowed.

Is the effect of an actress donning a man's clothes the same as that of a male actor impersonating a woman? Can you imagine the two main characters of David Henry Hwang's *M. Butterfly* as women? Why did Sam Shepard object when Baruch College presented his *True West* with two sisters instead of two brothers? Do we, as spectators, indeed suspend disbelief when we go to the theater and witness one actor playing multiple roles, as did Jefferson Mays in Doug Wright's *I Am My Own Wife* (2004 Pulitzer Prize), or Anna Deavere Smith in *Twilight: Los Angeles* or *Fires in the Mirror*? Such issues raise the question of who and what we should believe when we go to the theater, which brings us to the problematic question of reality on the stage and the devices used by playwrights, directors and actors to either build up or destroy theatrical illusion.

Papers are invited that address any of the above issues with reference to American plays or performances of the last twenty-five years or so. Possible topics include (but are not limited to):

- Crossing socially established norms as a way to social, racial and/or gender empowerment.
- Crossing the boundaries of theatrical illusion: how and to what ends do theatrical performances create, destroy, or transcend theatrical illusion.
- Devices of theatrical illusion that appear to transcend physical boundaries and their effects.
- Audience reception/perception of cross-dressing on the stage.
- Brechtian distancing and gestus: a refusal of theatrical illusion.
- The cognitive need for empathy as applied to theatrical reception.
- Other forms of transgression that allow the playwright/director/actor/audience to transcend concepts of the acceptable and of reality.

3) Life-Writing In The U.S.: Negotiating Border, Inter-, and Trans- Identities

Panel Chair: Isabel Durán Giménez-Rico

Institution: Universidad Complutense de Madrid

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One of the most outstanding developments in American studies over the last decade has been its transnational turn, the increasing interest in approaching the study of US culture in a more international framework, in terms of both the questions being asked and the resources deployed to answer them. Moreover, as many critical books have proved in the past decade, contemporary American life-writing goes much further than the narrow examination of an individual's life. In fact, transnationalism and transculturalism have inspired the most dynamic and challenging literary forms of self or collective representation, because literary border-crossing invites the autobiographer to discuss the complexities and universalities of ethnic, racial, cultural and gender intersections between languages, nations and cultures.

This panel seeks to engage diverse questions of border theories, intercultural lives, transnational, and transethnic identities, gender politics, postcolonial critique, and the basic question of how acts of negotiation influence the telling of lives. Moreover, as identities move away from the confines of traditional national and cultural designations, authors move away from loyalty to one language, and welcome language-crossing expressions. The panel also encourages comparative explorations of different ethnic, national, cultural and gender life narratives, seeking dialogues and synergies between them, as much as post-ethnic or post-gender revisions of the genre.

Suggested specific topics, always within the field of life-writing, include (but are not limited to):

- Negotiating inter- and transcultural identities in autobiography
- Expatriate, immigration and exile autobiography
- Class, gender and ethnic identity in autobiography
- Language-crossing in life-writing
- Transnational lives: comparative approaches
- Literary border-crossings: new generic manifestations in life-writing
- Theories of life-writing and transnationalism

4) The Transgressional Impulse in Chuck Palahniuk's Fiction

Panel Chair: Francisco Collado Rodríguez

Institution: Universidad de Zaragoza

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American writer Chuck Palahniuk has defined his own fiction as *transgressional* [sic], in this way labeling himself out of other definitions critics currently have imposed on his frequently acclaimed, (even if) sometimes disgusting, sometimes boring novels. He is not just a blank fictionist, nor a realist one, nor a mere writer of horror or posthuman fiction: he seems to be a little of everything. His peculiar style—if any—revises and reuses a variety of narrative modes, genres, subgenres, and topoi that he deploys mostly to defamiliarize common views his readers may still have about the self, the body, and our present socio-political condition. While exposing the political perversions of our current consumerist and suicidal society, his fiction is saturated with situations of bodily and mental states of diffusion; trespassing of gender, sex, and physical limits; body and mind thieves, and episodes of surrogation; all of them symptoms of what we might qualify as the maladies of our present non-ethical post-postmodern Western world.

This panel seeks contributions that may offer some (new) insights on the role social, political and stylistic transgressions play in Palahniuk's fiction. Suggested topics of discussion include (but are not limited to):

- Palahniuk's moral aims (if any) in his fluid portrayal of present manners.
- The role gender and sex transgressions play in his fiction, and the popular responses to it.
- The influence of his fiction on actual life: from fight clubs to the writing of assignments in university courses all over the world. From transgression to didacticism.
- Transgressive patterns in his stylistic presentations of an ever-flowing society.
- The roles of magic, horror, and religion in his portrayal of contemporary Western life.
- The exposure of body and self to a hyper-consumerist society: from the human to the posthuman and the surrogate.

5) 'White Indians' and Other Trans-Identities: Comparative Readings of the Experience of Adopted Captives

Panel Chair: M^a Ángeles Toda Iglesia

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The aim of this panel is to explore one of the earliest "trans-" experiences in American history and literature: that of adopted white captives of the Native Americans, that is, those persons, such as Mary Jemison or

Col. James Smith, who were “transformed” by the process of ritual adoption into full members of a Native American nation, whether or not they chose to retain this new identity for life. The objective is to set this experience within an equally “trans-” model of reading and interpretation, by putting it in relation with accounts of other experiences of assimilation, initiation, “passing,” mimicry, or “going native.” The accounts chosen for comparative readings may be factual or fictional, present-day or past. This approach links up with several recently opened areas of research:

- the interest in transethnic studies;
- the application of postcolonial models to the treatment of the issue of race in American literature and history;
- the connection between slave narratives and captivity narratives;
- and the connection between the fears and realities of British and other imperialisms and those of the American frontier.

6) Transgressing Boundaries: The Interrelationship of Poetry and the Visual Arts

Panel Chair: Viorica Patea Birk

Institution: Universidad de Salamanca

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Since the Romantic era the languages of philosophy, poetry and the arts have converged. The modernist aesthetic is characterized by an increased aspiration to transgress boundaries. Its literary doctrines are modeled on contemporary philosophical trends and theories of painting and sculpture.

This panel explores the inter-relationship between modernist/postmodernist poetics and visual arts. The aesthetics of twentieth-century Anglo-American poetry is based on the principles and techniques of non-figurative visual arts, which it constantly seeks to appropriate, integrate and translate into its own poetics. The Cubist technique of fragmentation, multiple perspectives, juxtaposition and collage were to become standard practices of literary modernism, which characterized Joyce's *Ulysses*, Pound's *Cantos* and Eliot's *The Waste Land*. Cubist readymades, *objets trouvés*, re-appear in Pound, Stevens or Williams' humble ordinary objects. The interaction between poetry and painting marked the beginning of the twentieth century and remained the hallmark of postmodernist poetics. Poets like Williams, Stevens and Moore, who did not choose to become expatriates, modernized their poetic idiom thanks to the influence of visual arts and the effervescent artistic milieu of New York.

This panel considers texts by modernist poets such as Pound, Eliot, Stevens, Williams and the way in which key concepts of modernist aesthetics, notions such as the ideogram, the vortex, the objective correlative and the impersonality theory are poetic equivalents of the new experiments taking place in the avant-garde visual arts.

Just as in the nineteenth century music was the quintessential art, by the turn of the century painting became the most fertile metaphor for aesthetic theory and a source of inspiration for all the arts. Painting was the leading art form: it opened the avenue of artistic experimentalism and was among the first to articulate the revolutionary language of twentieth-century artistic expression. Cubist and Expressionist painting articulated the technical repertoire that was to be adopted later as a means of artistic expression by other disciplines. Painting became the master art, the paradigm of aesthetic theory and the richest source of inspiration to all other arts. As Dasenbrock aptly observes, it set the example, which all other arts would follow.

Suggested topics:

- the relationship of modernist and postmodernist poetry and avant-garde art poets, painters and sculptors
- *ekphrasis*
- the principles of non-representational art and their influence on poetic language
- poets, poems and exhibits
- poetry, photography and film
- the trace of impressionism, cubism, futurism, abstract expressionism, and action-painting on modernist and postmodernist poets
- different avant-garde manifestos
- juxtaposition, the ideogram, the collage, the ready made, the theory of impersonality, and their poetic equivalents.
- poems, paintings, film, intermediality

- Many other related topics in American poetry are welcome.

7) Transnationalism and Masculinities: U.S. Literary and Filmic Representations

Panel Chair: Josep M. Armengol

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Transnationalism is used to describe the increased interconnectivity between people and the blurring of socio-economic boundaries between nation states. Promoting the flow of goods and people among regions, it has created a borderless world where migrants may develop transnational ties to more than one home country. Thus, transnationalism not only distinguishes between social and geographic spaces but sees “cultural dislocation” as an opportunity for “cross-cultural understanding” (Takaki 2002). In line

with these ideas, masculinity studies are also paying increasing attention to the relationship between masculinity and transnationalism, acknowledging that an understanding of the world gender order entails thinking about men and masculinities in global terms (Connell 1998). Thus, this panel invites submissions for papers that explore the issue of transnational masculinities, especially the contact between different models of masculinity in the 21st-century globalized world. Papers may explore, but are not limited to topics such as:

- the effect of globalization on masculinities,
- local vs. global masculinities,
- similarities and differences between different cultural concepts of masculinity around the globe,
- the (trans-)formation of hegemonic masculinity in the new global arena,
- local resistances to the dominant gender patterns,
- the emergence of new alternative models of being a man in the new world gender order.

More specifically, we would like to focus on representations of transnational masculinities in U.S. literature and cinema. The panel aims to explore how transnational fictions, literary and filmic, deal with “in-between spaces” of culture, questioning fixed notions of cultural and gender identity while opening spaces for alternative representations of masculinities. We are interested in all kinds of transnational gendered relations, not only between whites and non-whites, but also between and among different racialized masculinities.

8) Transnational/Transcultural Female Bodies in American Literature

Panel Chair: Eulalia Piñero Gil

Institution: Universidad Autónoma de Madrid

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Bodies are, undoubtedly, text and metaphor for the discourse that exercises control over them, and this is clearly patent in literary and audiovisual representations within American culture. In contemporary literary works, we are bearing witness to an unprecedented fictionalization and theorization of the body.

Contemporary women writers contest and undermine traditional representations of the body and present performative and unstable visions of bodies. The transnational / transcultural female body is a cultural locus that confronts memory, inheritance and the violence exercised over it. The literary text, on the other hand, becomes a sort of discursive patchwork where body and identity merge. The importance of the body in the construction of identities has been profusely studied by postcolonial and feminist literary critics that have concluded that the body is a sort of text that inscribes and represents every aspect of identity.

Therefore, the connection between the female body and the text is fluid, unstable, multiple and ever-changing. In many ways, the body becomes a map, a surface subject to social inscription, the site of a cultural history that is continually voicing ideologies.

As a result, the female body becomes postmodernism's latest frontier, the space where women challenge their past in search of a less limiting future. To conclude, the transnational/transcultural body that we shall approach in this panel is the one that transgresses limits and crosses all national and cultural borders in American Literature.

This panel welcomes papers that address and discuss the following issues in contemporary American literature (novel, short story, theater, poetry and essay):

- How do American women writers reflect and deconstruct issues such as the transnational / transcultural bodies in their literary creations?
- In what way(s) do American women writers represent those bodies escaping from one cultural space and moving into another, particularly if they are marked by race, gender and class issues or are subjected to presuppositions and assumptions?
- How does the female body become a map, a space that inscribes transnational and transcultural experiences in American literature?

9) Characterizing Diaspora Literatures in the U.S. Today

Panel Chair: Aitor Ibarrola Armendáriz

Institution: Universidad de Deusto, Bilbao

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Over the last two decades, the concepts of diaspora and transnationalism have become useful research lenses through which one may study the literary works produced by immigrant—and second-generation—writers who have retained ties with their homeland. Although both terms refer to cross-border processes, *diaspora* has often been used to refer to religious or national groups who, for different reasons, have been compelled to abandon their (real/imagined) homelands to live in exile, while *transnationalism* usually addresses both the immigrants' lasting ties across countries and, more broadly, the kind of social formations—networks, associations, and organizations—that result from their exchanges with their land of origin. This panel will focus on the rather intricate and fluid spaces that diasporic writers are often forced to occupy as they are constantly exposed to sentiments of nostalgia for and rejection of the homeland, mixed feelings about the demands for adaptation/integration made by the host country, and anxiety about their responsibility for their people back “home” and the new community forming in this foreign land.

Following Safran (1996), we could argue that the key characteristics of diasporic communities are: a) they or their ancestors suffered a traumatic dispersal from the homeland; b) they retain collective memories and a distinct group identity, which often makes them resist against full assimilation in the receiving society; c) solidarity ties grow among the group members as they perceive themselves as a minority group; and d) they show commitment to homeland-oriented projects intended to reshape its future by influencing it from abroad. Of course, the degree of importance and visibility that different writers grant to these characteristics in their works differs widely and, whereas some seem still very dependent on the ongoing problems in the homeland, others appear to be much more interested in the experiences of exclusion in the land of adoption. The list of writers who would fit under the label of the diasporic (or migrant, or subaltern, or hyphenated, or expatriate—although each of these terms bears its own specific connotations) is definitely too long to include it here. Possible paper topics include:

- Collective memories and distinct identities of diasporic communities.
- Dual/Multiple attachments of transnational communities to different lands.
- Sentiments of nostalgia for and rejection of the “homeland” in diasporic writing.
- Elements of trauma (and recovery) in exiled communities.
- Experiences of exclusion/alienation/discrimination in the new land of adoption.
- The role of advanced technologies and communication in the constitution of transnational networks.
- Elements of solidarity among diverse diasporic communities.
- Transnational ties of the diasporic communities and their influence on the homeland.
- Possible costs/benefits of regrounding oneself in a foreign land.

10) Transactions: Financial Elites, the Politics of Austerity and the Destruction of the Welfare State

Panel Chair: Dan Fyfe

Institution: Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria

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“Steal a little and they throw you in jail
Steal a lot and they make you king” —Bob Dylan

In the last few decades, financial elites have gained unprecedented power and influence in the United States and Europe. Since the crisis of 2008 we have watched the *banksters* receive trillions of dollars of taxpayer money in bailouts as a sinister politics of austerity has descended upon Europe and the United States, leaving widespread misery, foreclosure, unemployment, and rage in its wake. Does “starving the Beast” have bipartisan support? Do the IFM and World Bank intend to do to Europe what they did to Latin America in the 1980s? Is Greece just the first domino to fall in a plan to radically alter democratic

institutions (and the welfare state), with a concomitant redistribution of wealth upwards that threatens to destroy the social model that has been in place since the end of World War II? Has the combination of Wall Street greed, an ominous move toward the right in U.S./European governance, and the evisceration of the Left and the unions brought us to our proto-fascist moment?

This panel welcomes papers that analyze the politics behind the world financial crisis, the history of unwarranted financial power in the United States, and the threat to democracy—throughout its history—posed by unscrupulous banking interests operating, often in secrecy, in a culture of (relative) impunity. Possible paper topics include (but are not limited to):

- Andrew Jackson's fight against the Second Bank of the United States,
- the history of the Federal Reserve since its mysterious creation in 1913,
- the House of Morgan and World War I,
- Prescott Bush and Nazi Germany,
- the Savings and Loan scandal of the 1980s,
- and today's ongoing scandals that are facilitated by the "revolving door" that links Wall Street to the White House.

11) Food Crossings: From Transgenics to Black Vegans

Panel Chair: Salvador Rodríguez Nuero

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From Thomas Jefferson's Monticello vegetable garden to Michelle Obama's White House organic garden, food has always been a major site of American political, social, economic, and cultural fixation. Food is the interface connecting nature with the human body, bringing nature to the table; and its socially constructed significances are many-layered, having a high symbolic potential. Agriculture was the means by which food was produced and understood. However, the food-environment connection was not established; and food and eating were of little concern for environmental groups and advocates, if not a minor problem related to agriculture side-effects. Food invisibility was the direct consequence of many years of cheap food policy and the subsequent eating habits that promoted, as a result of a sharp decrease in crop prices, an increase in monocultures (soy and corn), and the ruin and abandonment of many traditional family farms: industrial agriculture took hold of the territory. In 1977 Wendell Berry, in his pioneer work *The Unsettling of America*, warned of the devastating consequences this agribusiness system was having on the health of the environment and of the people and the communities they belonged to.

It was not until the food safety scandals of the 1980s that the American public opinion awoke from the consumer capitalist dream of food coming from nowhere, with no relation to the origin and the ways it was produced and/or processed. Transgenics epitomized the agribusiness control of the whole food chain, a control in the hands of very few corporations lobbying agriculture policy makers in Washington. Food and farming became a locus of American civil society's disenchantment with consumer capitalism, and a thrust to create "new social and economic spaces removed from the influence of big corporations... and the government" (Pollan 2010). The publication of articles and books, and the release of documentary films dealing with these issues—Schloesser's *Fast Food Nation* (2002), Marion Nestle's *Food Politics* (2001), or Deborah Koons Garcia's *The Future of Food* (2004 book; 2006 film); Spurolock's *Super Size Me* (2004), Pollan's bestseller *The Omnivore's Dilemma* (2006) and more recently documentary films such as Woolf's *King Corn* (2007) or Kenner's *Food Inc.* (2009)—revealed the connection between methods of industrial food production and agricultural policy; and food-borne illnesses, childhood obesity and the decline of family incomes (poverty) as well as issues related to environmental damage and animal welfare. Within this context, the food movement was born, a heterogeneous array of advocacy groups with sometimes contradictory standpoints and interests, but with food as the intersecting point. However, the Jeffersonian narratives about food and farming obscured the role that the labor of oppressed groups had (and is still having) in the US food production system, so dear to American novelists from slave narratives to Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*, John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* or Helena Maria Viramontes' *Under the Feet of Jesus*. More recently, scholars such as Velasco, Biltekoff, William-Forson, de la Peña or A. Breeze Harper have called our attention to a more critical study of food issues, introducing class, gender and race as necessary variables in the analysis, thereby establishing a bridge between the food movement and food and environmental justice.

We are looking for papers exploring these topics or the ones below from a historical, social, cultural or literary point of view:

- Campaigns for animal rights and welfare (P.E.T.A.).
- Campaigns against genetically modified organisms (GMO).
- The rise of organic and locally produced food: *locavores* and farmer's market. Community supported agriculture (CSA). Vegan movement.
- Obesity in America. Policing the body.
- Farm bill reform, farmland preservation, and rural economic sustainability.
- Urban agriculture.
- Food and class, race, ethnicity and gender issues.
- Hunger in America. Food access and sovereignty.

12) Music Which Crosses Borders: Sounds and Songs Which Come and Go

Panel Chair: Ángel Chaparro Sainz

Institution: Universidad del País Vasco

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"The U.S.-Mexico border es *una herida abierta* where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds. And before a scab forms it hemorrhages again, the lifeblood of two worlds merging to form a third country-a border culture" (Anzaldúa *La Frontera* 1987: 3). The closure and rigidity of borders, together with their concomitant fluidity and permeability are the source of cultures that transgress boundaries, genres and disciplines. Music, among other cultural manifestations, both commercial and independent, has become an effective vehicle of transmission of ideas and ideals, as well as a link and source of knowledge of cultures across borders and territories, or in Neil Campbell's words, "as music disperses across cultures and through the experience of the listener, it breaks and reconnects, forming different strands that confound any claim to authenticity or "purity" (*The Rhizomatic West* 2008: 307).

The aim of this panel is to observe the ways in which music represents the existence, transgression and movement across borders. Papers related to the depiction in music of migratory movements within, from and towards the United States will be welcome. Similarly, diverse approaches to music, from the literary, to the technical, to the ways in which music migrates (is exported) transnationally will be considered.

The following list suggests a variety of topics on music, the United States and physical, cultural and social borders, but others in an analogous direction will be welcomed for consideration:

- American Music: The Global & The Local
- Music and Literature: Crossing Borders and Genres
- Migration in Lyrics
- Hybridity and Fusion
- The border in music
- The sound of the desert
- Alt-Country: Cultures & Traditions Merge
- The economy of global music

13) Opaquely Transparent: Crisscrossing Identities in American Literature and Film

Panel Chair: Isabel González Díaz

Institution: Universidad de La Laguna

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This panel intends to link the ongoing debate around *transparency* in relation to identity formation in US narratives. Transparency has traditionally been claimed as one of the strongest tenets of American identity. However, transparency is hardly transparent when communities other than the currently accepted by the dominant discourse claim their right to belong. Their discourse, situated at the crossroads of longing for recognition, appears to the dominant discourse as “opaque.” In *Giving an Account of Oneself* (2005), Judith Butler reflects on the opacity of the subject to itself referring to transparency as a conceit, whilst deconstructing the binary transparency/opacity. Reminding us that power is involved in the process of recognition, she emphasizes the relationality of subjects.

Butler’s study of the opacity, vulnerability, responsibility and (un)accountability of subjects seems to be a good point of departure for different analyses of issues of identity in the United States, where categories such as race, class, gender, sexuality, or nationality have crisscrossed perceptions of the self since the very foundation of the nation. The vindication of some of those categories and the claim for social acceptance are seen as signs of transparency, but we may find narratives where the opacity that still remains within some subjects is precisely what is highlighted. The effects that the opacity and/or transparency of their identities have on the subjects and their communities at large have been widely portrayed in American narratives, and it is our aim to discuss some of them in this panel.

Papers are welcome on these or other issues related to opacity/transparency and identity:

- First-person narratives of conscious or unconscious self-recognition or opacity.
- Narratives of closeting and/or coming out, not only as regards sexuality, but also race, class, or any other category.
- Narratives of hiding selves, or of sudden self-awareness.
- Narratives where ambiguous positionalities are displayed.
- Narratives of identities that collide within the individual and/or the community, where intersections create either a maze or a fortunate way out.
- Narratives of vulnerability.

14) The Trials and Tribulations of Translation

Panel Chair: Michael A. Rockland

Institution: Rutgers University

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There are several different forms of translation. Normally, we think of translation as simply going from one language to another, but to what extent can this only be done properly when the translator is intensely familiar not only with both languages but with both cultures? To what extent is translation, especially as regards American and Spanish works, an index to understanding both cultures? There is also “translation” when one moves from one art form to another—as, for example, in adapting literature to film and vice versa. This panel will be concerned with all forms of translation, with topics that might include, but not be restricted, to:

- Translation from one language to another. Is translation, while necessary, inevitably a *delito* as Julio Cesar Santoyo suggests in the title of his book *El delito de traducir*? Might one argue that, in a way, all translation is a form of “plagiarism” since, inevitably, a translated work is now entirely the translator’s words and not the writer’s?
- What specific problems need to be faced when various works of your choosing are translated specifically from Spanish to English or vice versa?
- How does translation inevitably change meaning as suggested in Deutscher’s *Why the World Looks Different in Other Languages*, which holds that language “actually organizes habits of mind and influences perceptions in different cultures?” Some examples of translations that radically alter meaning, culture to culture, might be offered.
- What are the particular struggles that must be gone through when literature (words) is translated or adapted to movies (primarily visual)? Why do some of the greatest books make the worst movies while some poor to mediocre books sometimes are turned into great movies?
- What particular cultural problems are involved in dubbing on the one hand and subtitling films on the other?
- How can slang and even taboo words be properly handled in the translation process?

15) Trans-Communication: Making Matter Talk

Panel Chair: Irene Sanz Alonso

Institution: Universidad de Alcalá

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Trespassing boundaries has always been a leitmotif in North American culture, and one way to do so is by means of communication. Developments in cognitive psychology, studies on ape and dolphin communication, the phenomenological revalorization of the body, or the emerging field of biosemiotics signal that a change has taken place where speaking human animals are not the only possible interlocutors and nonhuman animals can also join the *conversation*. Likewise, technical innovations have opened new possibilities for interaction and in some cases have created an illusion of communication between the human and the machine. This is amply illustrated in science fiction.

This movement away from logocentrism in an age of environmental crisis has facilitated an openness to other forms of being in the world and a will to being attuned to them. Furthermore, this “post linguistic turn” has highlighted matter and the corporeal by recognizing the subtleties of communication among organisms. And finally, since humans have become more than ever cyborgs in a time where technology impregnates every area of life, it can also be argued that this move towards non-logocentrism has broadened the scope of communication also to the machine.

Thus, this panel focuses on exploring how the communication between humans and nonhumans, or among nonhumans themselves, is represented in cultural artifacts, from literary fiction to cinema or TV series. Its aim is to demonstrate how often the human/non-human dualism is challenged through dialogues between “trans” creatures that show that human language is just one way of communicating among other possibilities.

Possible paper topics include (but are not limited to):

- Cyborg identities and the speaking subject
- Animals in sports: human – nonhuman trans-dialogues
- Representation of “trans” communication in fiction, cinema or TV series
- Human-machine communication and the trespassing of matter boundaries
- More than words: making the body and the machine talk in a trans-world
- Trans-dependencies: Therapeutic animals and the disabled
- Virtual matter in cyberpunk fiction

16) Encounters of the Third Space Kind: American Science Fiction as the Experience of Coming Across Otherness

Panel Chair: Ángel Mateos-Aparicio Martín-Albo

Institution: Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha

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The American cultural landscape has been pervaded by the encounter with Otherness from the time of the first colonial settlements. European cultures struggled to represent and assimilate a reality that was alien to them, and as a consequence the discourse about American territories became permeated with a characteristic sense of wonder that Stephen Greenblatt called “the marvelous” (1992). The marvelous can then be described as a way to come to terms with difference, whether embodied by unknown landscapes or alien nations.

While the North-American continent remained unexplored, the Wild West provided the space for the encounter with aliens and the wilderness, but when the actual Western frontier was officially closed at the end of the nineteenth century, the American mythology of the border had to move to a different symbolic setting. Essentially a by-product of the arms race in the Cold War, the conquest of outer space became the “final” frontier, and the genre where American culture continued to try to come to terms with difference was science fiction. The genre was the ideal depository of this mythological material, because it is impregnated by a sense of wonder that Darko Suvin (1979) describes as “cognitive estrangement.” Science fiction has therefore succeeded the western as the borderline genre where American culture tries to resolve its historical confrontation with nature and encounter with aliens, as David Mogen (1982) and others have suggested.

This panel would thus focus on American science fiction as a genre that intends to go across and beyond known borders in order to endlessly re-enact the American experience of encounters with Otherness in the wilderness and the frontier. Science fiction literature and film explore unknown territories where the categories of nature and culture (civilization) are questioned and where alternative representations of gender, race, and class become the norm. At the same time, the genre can be best described as a transgressor of established borderlines, as it often incorporates characters, plots and themes from other genres such as the western and detective fiction. From the alternative representations of the western frontier experience found in Ray Bradbury’s *The Martian Chronicles* (1951) and Kim Stanley Robinson Mars trilogy, to the exploration of racial and gender hybridity in Ursula LeGuin *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1960) and Octavia Butler’s *Xenogenesis* trilogy; from the revision of the wilderness in Ernest Callenbach’s *Ecotopia* (1975) and Cormac McCarthy *The Road* (2006), to recent films that revise the past and present South-Western frontier as *Avatar* (2009) and *Monsters* (2010), this panel invites papers dealing with boundary crossing in science fiction.

17) Crossing the Border in American Culture

Panel Chair: Ana María Manzanas Calvo

Institution: Universidad de Salamanca

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The border—the magic curtain—is the beginning of one sort of life, the ending of another. It is a hard line to walk, a difficult stage to travel. It remains a meeting ground, but often of conflict and of footloose cultural contact.

Thomas Torrans *The Magic Curtain*

What are these goddamn lines anyway? What do they connect? What do they divide?

Yamashita, *Tropic of Orange*

History can be described as an unrelenting sequence of walls, from Hadrian's Wall, the Great Wall, the Berlin Wall, the Wailing Wall, the Walls of Jericho, or the always re-enforced fences between Mexico and the US, between Morocco and Spain. It is, as Catherine Kearns remarks, "as if History hypostasizes itself in a string of walls across time." Yet the question is how do walls and boundaries vertebrate an illusion of defensive unity against an always threatening plural, against the alien, against chaos and the non-world. Built into the fantasy of the stoppage, of the visual verticality attending walls and fences, is its very opposite, for in spite of their role as centripetal unifying lines demarcating a metaphysics of the pure, borders also bespeak a mediating role. Lines and borders also emphasize the ambiguous continuity between and among spaces. So we then ask, if borders divide, how do they also connect? Boundaries, as Michel de Certeau would have it, function as "a middle place composed of interactions," a third element or space, or a contact zone of mutual interactions.

This workshop welcomes papers dealing with the various functions and faces of the border as a double-edged mechanism in American Literature and Culture. Papers can address issues such as

- How does the border challenge and add to a definition of national identity?
- What are the effects of the border on its distinctive actors, such as border patroller and crosser?
- What are the effects of the border on language and on our vision of reality?
- Should we, as Derrida comments, make very little of the border?
- Is the border an aporetic mechanism?
- How does it contribute to the reinforcing of the self versus the other?
- Is the border a contact zone as Marie Louise Pratt would have it, or is it more akin to a war or combat zone?
- Can the border be seen as a paradigm of unity/plurality?

- Is it possible to establish a “border mechanism” in different historical contexts? And linked to this question, how well does the border situation in the United States travel to other geographical locations, especially in Europe?

18) The Historical Significance of Border Crossing in the United States

Panel Chair: María Luz Arroyo Vázquez

Institution: Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia

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Borders have been frequently perceived and analysed as metaphorical abstractions in US culture and history. This symbolic approach to the Frontier, though revealing and effective at times, has also tended to somehow eclipse the breathtaking materiality of real borders. This panel aims at examining the historical significance of boundaries in the United States by analysing concrete examples, individual or collective, of border crossing. A historical approach may help us grasp the persistent effects of physical boundaries that have either united or divided people in the United States. At the same time, the analysis of specific examples in different historical and political contexts in the US may help us reflect on different experiences on both sides of the border, of those who cross it and those who welcome/resist the incomers.

This panel welcomes papers focusing on real testimonies that illustrate struggles, achievements, sacrifices and self-sustaining identities. We especially search for proposals that explore the cultural construction of border crossings in personal memoirs and in films. Paper proposals can be concerned with border crossings in different historical contexts and include significant figures such as explorers, settlers, missionaries, immigrants, et cetera.

Other possible paper topics include (but are not limited to):

- Border crossing as progress or regression
- Geographical or figurative cultural zones of separation
- Demarcation of frontiers
- Immigration
- Inclusion or exclusion of collective or individual identities
- The significance of travel experience as self-reflection
- Internal or external boundaries
- Perceptions of the Other

19) Miscellaneous Panel

Panel Chairs: Begoña Simal/Víctor Junco

Institution: Universidade da Coruña/Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria

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GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPANTS

Abstracts of Proposals are to be e-mailed directly to the chair of the selected panel using the form at the end of this file. The deadline for submitting abstracts is **October 15, 2012**. Panel chairs are expected to accept/reject proposals and have panels set up by **November 15**.

- Panels cannot have more than **THREE** contributions each.
- The deadline for the submission of the final and complete version of papers accepted by panel chairs is **February 10, 2013**.
- All complete papers have to be submitted in electronic format to the panel chair who accepted them. Please, **include a brief CV** of approx. 300 words, indicating your present affiliation and main publications.
- Before the Conference, all the papers will be circulated among the panel participants.
- The final version should never exceed **2500 words**. Panelists will be talking for about 20' and there will be a final round of questions once all panelists have presented their contributions. Panel chairs are also expected to offer a brief summary and comments on the contributions to their own panels.
- Panel sessions should not last more than one hour and thirty minutes, including the question/answer section.
- All participants **MUST** have registered for the Conference ahead of time (see SAAS web page at <http://www.saasweb.org>).
- Panel chairs are also expected to dissuade panelists from simply reading their papers.
- If panelists have any special requirements for their presentations, they should let their panel chairs know as soon as possible and fill up the appropriate section of the form below.

"IMPORTANT: Non-members of SAAS (of all nationalities) are welcome to participate in the conference, but will be required to pay membership dues for one year as well as the conference registration fee. Members of ASA (American Studies Association), need only pay the conference registration fee."

PRÓXIMOS CONGRESOS INSTITUTO FRANKLIN - UAH

FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON IRREGULAR IMMIGRATION IN A COMPARATIVE CONTEXT: UNITED STATES-SPAIN



Alcalá de Henares, November 28 – 30, 2012

This International Conference seeks to be an open forum between American and Spanish experts on irregular immigration from disciplines ranging across social and legal sciences.

Important dates:

- October 15, 2012: Deadline for submitting proposals.
- October 30 2012: Publication of accepted papers.
- November, 15 2012: Deadline for online registration.

For further information: www.institutofranklin.net/conferences

Or contact Esther Claudio: esther.claudio@institutofranklin.net

FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD: COMPARISON BETWEEN SPAIN AND THE UNITED STATES

Alcalá de Henares, April 18-20, 2013

This conference aims to be an open forum for debate among specialists and people interested in education, bilingualism and its relationship with other social, cultural, political, economic, linguistic and pedagogical issues.

Proposals are welcome from all graduate students, researchers or other professionals working in academia and academic administrative positions. They can be sent from October 1st, 2012 – December 15th, 2012.

Important deadlines:

- December 20th, 2012: Publication of accepted proposals.
- March 15th, 2013: Deadline for register at the conference (online registration) with paper.

For further information: www.institutofranklin.net/conferences

Or contact Esther Claudio: esther.claudio@institutofranklin.net

THE 7TH TRANSATLANTIC STUDIES CONFERENCE: GLOBAL CHALLENGES TO THE TRANSATLANTIC WORLD

Alcalá de Henares, October 24-26, 2013

The Consortium for Transatlantic Studies and Scholarship (CTSS), centered at the Franklin Institute-UAH, consists of transatlantic universities in the Americas and Europe. CTSS invites scholars in the humanities and social sciences to participate in an interdisciplinary conference on Global Challenges to the Transatlantic World on October 24-26, 2013. Proposals can be sent from October 30, 2012 – July 1, 2013.

Priority in the selection process will be given to papers that problematize in depth the transatlantic dimension – e.g. comparative, cross-cultural and intercultural methodologies, analytical perspectives, and pedagogic approaches. The organizers especially welcome young scholars and postgraduates.

Important deadlines:

- September 1, 2013: Deadline for registration at conference with reduced price.
- September 24, 2013: Deadline for registration at the conference (online registration) with paper.

For further information: www.institutofranklin.net/conferences

Or contact Esther Claudio: esther.claudio@institutofranklin.net

PUBLICACIONES SOCIOS DE SAAS

Espejo, Ramón, ed. *Panorama desde el puente*. Arthur Miller. Madrid: Cátedra, 2012.



Cuando Arthur Miller escribe y estrena en 1955 «Panorama desde el puente» es, sin duda, un autor ya consagrado tanto en Estados Unidos como en el resto del mundo. Una vez más, el dramaturgo norteamericano sigue empeñado en mostrarle al hombre contemporáneo quién es y cómo vive, y le invita a reflexionar sobre quién podría ser y cómo podría vivir. «Panorama desde el puente» tiene su origen en una historia que Miller escuchó mientras trabajaba en los astilleros de Brooklyn: un estibador había denunciado a dos hermanos ante las autoridades de Inmigración. El tema de la inmigración es justamente el que hace que la obra cruce fronteras temporales y espaciales y resulte relevante en cualquier momento o sociedad. Pero además, usando como telón de fondo la inmigración, Miller

reflexiona sobre las fronteras entre la ley y la moral. Parece preocuparle que algo no necesariamente inmoral sea ilegal y que algo que podría ser claramente inmoral no suscite en la ley más que indiferencia.

Ibarraran, Amaia, Martin Simonson, and David Rio (eds.). *The Neglected West: Contemporary Approaches to Western American Literature*. The American Literary West Series. London: Portal, 2012.

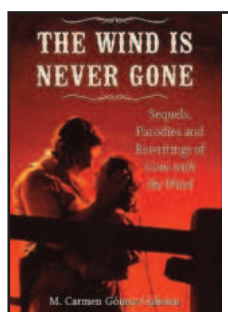


No place has probably been more fantasized and imagined than the American West. No territory has probably been more essentialized and generally defined than the American West. No people have probably been more (mis)represented and 125 stereotyped than the American Westerners. No “state of mind” has probably been more shared and acknowledged than that of the American West. The conception of the title of this volume, *The Neglected West*, originates from the assumption of the existence of a West, as described and imagined previously, but introduces the idea of the existence of other Wests, many Wests, different Wests, neglected Wests. The book has been conceived and designed as a compilation of heterogeneous academic works that attempt to fill some of the voids that the western myth has

created. It provides a channel for the many and varied ways that the West has been experienced by individuals, retold by them, and eventually redefined through literature and culture in general. The book aims to offer an open, dynamic vision and revision of the modes of expression that have been traditionally linked to the West and the “western” as a valid formula for its portrayal. It also shows other ways of experiencing the Movement West, its settling and the West itself, devoid of the traditionally accepted,

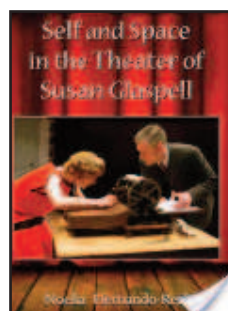
normative, male, cowboy, white experience. Finally, it portrays the existence of other “Others,” or other silenced/neglected/ignored Western identities. Overall, these essays and their authors seek to convey an international, contemporary and revisionist vision/version of the West. One that proves that the cowboy was never alone and his voice was never the only voice.

Gomez-Galisteo, M. Carmen. *The Wind Is Never Gone. Sequels, Parodies and Rewritings of Gone with the Wind.* Jefferson, North Carolina, and London: McFarland and Company, Inc., Publishers, 2011.



More than seventy years after its publication in 1936, Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind* has never been out of print. An icon of American culture, it has had similar success abroad, popular in Japan, Russia, and post-World War II Europe, among other places and times. This work analyzes the continuations of Mitchell's novel: the authorized sequels, *Scarlett* by Alexandra Ripley and Rhett Butler's *People* by Donald McCaig; the unauthorized parody *The Wind Done Gone* by Alice Randall and a politically correct parody; and the many fan fiction stories posted online. The book also explores *Gone with the Wind*'s ambiguous ending, the perceived need to publish an authorized sequel, and the legal battle to determine who may re-write *Gone with the Wind*.

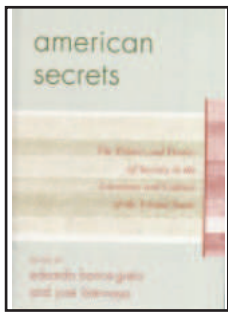
Hernando Real, Noelia. *Self and Space in the Theater of Susan Glaspell.* Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2011.



Founding member of the Provincetown Players, Pulitzer Prizewinning playwright, best-selling novelist, and short story writer, Susan Glaspell (1876-1948) was a great contributor to American literature. An exploration of eleven plays written between the years 1915 and 1943; this critical study focuses on 123 one of Glaspell's central themes, the interplay between place and identity. This study examines the means Glaspell employs to engage her characters in proxemical and verbal dialectics with the forces of place that turn them into victims of location. Of particular interest are her characters' attempts to escape the influence of territoriality and shape identities of their own.

Table of Contents: Introduction. 1. Towards Geopathology in Susan Glaspell's Modern Drama. 2. American Geomythologies Revisited as Part of Dramatic Geopathology. 3. Geodichotomies in the Configuration of Dramatic Geopathology. 4. The Burden of the Past in Dramatic Geopathology. 5. Imagery of Death in Dramatic Geopathology. 6. Dramatic Principles of Departure. Afterword

Liste Noya, José and Eduardo Barrios Grela, ed. *American Secrets: The Politics and Poetics of Secrecy in the Literature and Culture of the United States*. Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 2011.



Predicated upon the principles of political freedom, cultural openness, religious tolerance, individual self-reliance, and ethnic diversity, the United States of America has been tempted recurrently by the lures of the secret. *American Secrets* explores this political, historical, and cultural phenomenon from many, often surprisingly, overlapping angles in these analyses of the literary and cultural uses and abuses of secrecy within a democratic culture. Through analyses of diverse literary works and cultural manifestations-from Mark Twain's anti-imperialist prophecies to 9/11 conspiracy theories, from the traumas of the Vietnam war to the homophobia of the American military establishment, from the unresolved dilemmas of nuclear politics to the secret ecologies shunted aside by the exploitation of the environment, from

the questionings of national identity on the ethnic and (trans)sexual margins to the confessional modes of poetry and the poetics of the unspeakable and unrepresentable-these essays reveal the politics within the poetics and, indissociably, the poetics fueling the politics of secrecy in its ambivalent deployment. Secrecy often seems to be a question without an answer or an answer that either seems to beg the question or to be a question itself. These essays address this paradox with their own questioning explorations. In answering such questions, the volume as a whole provides an illuminating overview of the pervasiveness of the secret and its modalities in American culture while also dealing specifically with the poetics of the secret in its various, historically recurrent literary manifestations.

List of Contributors: Shelley Fisher Fishkin; Carmen Méndez García; Esther Pérez Villalba; David Río; Boris Vejdovsky; Robert Vorlicky; Marie C. Bouchet; Carmen Induráin Eraso; Inmaculada Lara Bonilla; Steve Schessler; Paul Scott Derrick; Jefferey Simons; Carmen Flys Junquera; Christian Hummelsund Voie; Aitor Ibarrola-Armendariz; María Frías.

Manuel, Carme, ed. *Franklin Evans, el borracho* de Walt Whitman. Trad. Sergio Saiz. Madrid: Cátedra, 2012.



Despreciada por su propio autor, olvidada por la crítica y desconocida para la mayoría de los lectores, «Franklin Evans» es la única novela que Whitman escribió en toda su vida. La obra es un compendio de las preocupaciones y gustos del entonces joven periodista y popular autor Walter Whitman, quien una década más tarde se convertiría en Walt Whitman, la voz poética representativa de los Estados Unidos del siglo XIX. De «Franklin Evans» llegaron a venderse unos veinte mil ejemplares, una cifra que, sin embargo, jamás alcanzó ninguna edición de «Hojas de hierba» en vida del autor. La novela pertenece a un género que durante el siglo XIX inundó el mercado literario y la vida de los norteamericanos: la ficción antialcohólica, un fenómeno integrado en las corrientes reformistas que barrieron

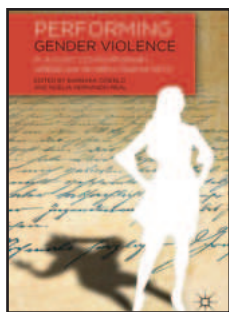
los Estados Unidos de la primera mitad del siglo XIX. En ese sentido, además del tema antialcohólico otro más general recorre la novela: la educación y formación del joven norteamericano en una sociedad crispada por los cambios y la crisis económica.

Manuel, Carme, ed. *Conflicto de fuerzas* de Pauline E. Hopkins. Trad. Carme Manuel. Madrid: Cátedra, 2012.



Pauline E. Hopkins (1859-1930), intelectual, activista y escritora, ha sido considerada por la crítica como la principal responsable de crear el ambiente propicio para que en el rancio Boston de principios del siglo XX naciera un primer florecimiento de las letras afroamericanas. “La escritora negra más productiva de principios del siglo XX”, publicó cuatro novelas, siete narraciones, un breve compendio histórico, varios ensayos biográficos y una gran variedad de artículos periodísticos. El redescubrimiento de la escritora es una pieza crucial para recomponer el puzle literario norteamericano. «Conflicto de fuerzas» es una novela que reescribe la historia de Estados Unidos desde el punto de vista de la historia afroamericana. Una fabulación que pretende erigirse en correctivo de la imagen estereotipada, aceptada y fomentada por los Estados Unidos de la época, del hombre y de la mujer afroamericanos, según la cual la perversión de la imagen del negro permitía a los defensores de la supremacía del hombre blanco continuar con su política de fraudulento robo de derechos, linchamientos y segregación racial.

Ozieblo, Barbara & Noelia Hernando-Real. *Performing Gender Violence. Plays by Contemporary American Women Dramatists*. New York: Palgrave, Macmillan, 2012.



Violence against women in plays by women has earned little mention. This revolutionary collection fills that gap, focusing on plays by American women dramatists, written in the last thirty years, which specific manifestations of violence in carefully selected plays: psychological violence, violence within the family, violence suffered by women at the hands of the medical profession, violence caused by situations of war and social injustice. This book encompasses the theatrical devices used to represent violence on the stage in an age of virtual, immediate reality as much as the problematics of gender violence in modern society.

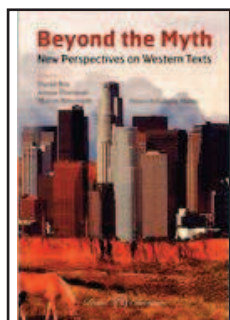
Piñero, Eulalia, edición, notas y traducción. *El despertar*. Kate Chopin. Madrid: Cátedra, 2012.



Esta edición es la primera traducción al español que incluye notas y un exhaustivo aparato crítico sobre la biografía, el contexto social y la historia de la recepción de la novela, además de una pormenorizada descripción de las distintas interpretaciones más recientes de su obra. Asimismo, se ofrecen al lector nuevas vías interpretativas de una de las novelas más leídas del canon de la literatura norteamericana. Kate Chopin es, sin duda, la primera escritora norteamericana que se formó fuera de la trama ideológica protestante y de los parámetros de la historia cultural calvinista. Su ascendencia francesa, su bilingüismo y biculturalismo la conectaron directamente con la tradición literaria europea. Las cualidades estéticas e ideológicas de sus relatos y de *El despertar* muestran una sofisticación formal y un cosmopolitismo ajenos a la moral o a los juicios de valor convencionales. Cuestiones consideradas trágicas e inmorales en la literatura decimonónica respetable y edificante, como el suicidio, la infidelidad o el adulterio, que no encontraban eco en la literatura norteamericana de la época, fueron tratadas por la escritora en el contexto local y con el realismo con que lo hacían los escritores contemporáneos franceses.

La publicación de *The Awakening* en 1899 desencadenó una cascada de críticas negativas que mostraban los condicionantes y prejuicios morales de los críticos norteamericanos de fin de siglo. Considerada a menudo como la Madame Bovary criolla, la protagonista, Edna Pontellier, es una mujer burguesa que entra en crisis al poner en duda el papel del matrimonio y la maternidad, manifiesta abiertamente su deseo sexual y decide romper con toda la seguridad que le otorga su privilegiado estatus social.

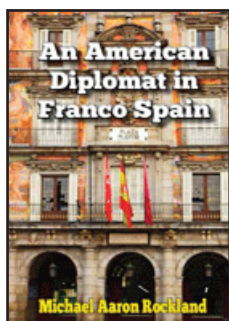
Rio, David, Amaia Ibarraran, and Martin Simonson (eds.). *Beyond the Myth: New Perspectives on Western Texts*. The American Literary West Series. London: Portal, 2011.



Classical notions of the West and associated images, symbols, and values retain their appeal for an important number of Americans, as well as engaging the imagination of an international audience. However, despite the resilience of the myth, it may be argued that an increasing number of artistic portraits of the American West debunk traditional mythology, rejecting at the same time extreme reductionism to simplistic binary oppositions, such as the one between myth and reality. Instead, the main emphasis is on the West as a complex, interrelated, unfinished, and plural space, consisting of multiple meanings and often intercultural experiences and identities. In this globalized age of trans-oceanic studies the international and hybrid properties of western American culture have become more visible than ever. Most of the essays in this book support this shift towards transnational frameworks, both challenging reductionist regional and national perspectives and vindicating the point of view of the outsider. Adopting transnational

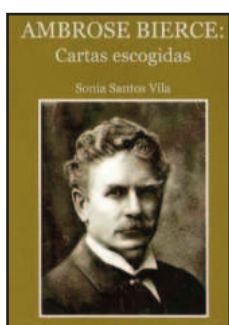
perspectives does not mean neglecting the importance of regional and local studies that testify to the multiple and overlapping cultures and literatures existing in the American West. The book embraces a diverse literary western landscape, aiming to mediate between the regional and the global in order to understand a literature that, after all, claims to be both exceptional and universal. This volume also extends the analysis of western iconography to other artistic manifestations than writing, adopting primarily a postwestern approach.

Rockland, Michael. *An American Diplomat in Spain*. East Brunswick, NJ: Hansen Publishing Group, 2012.



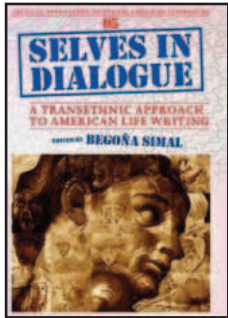
An American Diplomat in Franco Spain is filled with Michael Aaron Rockland's experiences as a cultural attache at the United States embassy in Madrid, Spain in the 1960s. He captures episodes of historical and cultural significance as he goes about doing his country's business. Some of his stories are quite poignant while others are quite amusing. He shares with his readers how he avoided shaking Francisco Franco's hand, how he spent a day with Martin Luther King in Madrid, how his son was selected to be in the movie *Dr. Zhivago*, how he came to know several Kennedys, including Senator Edward Kennedy, Pat Lawford Kennedy, and Jackie Kennedy, and how the U.S. accidentally dropped four unarmed hydrogen bombs on Spain. Throughout these stories, Rockland explains Spanish culture, past and present, with his experiences involving bull fighting, being a Jew in a very Catholic Spain, his love affair with Spanish food, and what is lost in translation.

Santos Vila, Sonia, ed. *Ambrose Bierce: Cartas escogidas*. Barcelona: Ediciones Rubeo, 2011.



Este volumen es un epistolario constituido por cincuenta cartas que ofrece al lector la cercanía a una de las parcelas más íntimas del escritor norteamericano Ambrose Bierce: su pensamiento. A través de las cartas se descubre la genialidad, y, al mismo tiempo, el talante personal del autor, una personalidad compleja pero sumamente atractiva dentro del panorama de la literatura estadounidense decimonónica. Estas misivas van dirigidas a familiares y amigos, personas siempre muy próximas a él, a quienes el escritor confía sus inquietudes, aconseja, instruye o, simplemente, expresa su afecto y cariño. En ellas se asoma la crudeza del temperamento de Bierce -o Bitter Bierce- mediante el sarcasmo y la ironía, traducción al papel de una actitud soberbia y una tendencia vital satírica y mordaz. La lectura de estas cartas no dejará al lector indiferente, siendo testimonios fieles de un espíritu rebelde y singular.

Simal, Begoña, ed. *Selves in Dialogue: A Transethnic Approach to American Life Writing*. Rodopi (CAEAL series, # 5) Amsterdam/New York, NY, 2011.



This book constitutes an explicit answer to the urgent call for a comparative study of American autobiography. This collection of essays ostensibly intends to cut across cultural, “racial” and/or “ethnic” boundaries, introducing the concept of “transethnicity” and arguing for its increasing validity in the ever-changing field of American Studies. Accordingly, the comparative analysis in *Selves in Dialogue* is implemented not by juxtaposing essays that pay “separate but equal” attention to specific “monoethnic” or “monocultural” traditions—as has been the usual strategy in book-length publications of this sort—, but by critically engaging with two or more different traditions in every single essay. Mixing rather than segregating. The transethnic approach proposed in this collection does not imply erasing the very

difference and diversity that makes American autobiographies all the more thrilling to read and study. Group-specific research of an “intra-ethnic” nature should and will continue to thrive. And yet, the field of American Studies is now ready to indulge more freely, and more knowledgeably, in transethnic explorations of life writing, in an attempt to delineate both the divergences and the similarities between the different autobiographies written in the US. Because of its unusual perspective, *Selves in Dialogue* can be of interest not only for specialists in life writing, but also for those working in the larger fields of American Literature, Ethnic Studies or American Studies.

Table of Contents. Begoña Simal: *Selves in Dialogue: An Introduction*. Jeffrey Gray: *Identity*. Ana M^a Manzanás: *Self and Nation in Franklin's Autobiography and Maxine Hong Kingston's The Woman Warrior*. Rachel Ihara and Jaime Cleland: *Ethnic Authorship and the Autobiographical Act: Zitkala-Ša, Sui Sin Far, and the Crafting of Authorial Identity*. Brenda R. Smith: *“We, Too, Sing America”: The Construction of American Subjectivity in African American Migration and European Immigrant Autobiographies*. Anna M. Brígido-Corachán: *Native Journeys of Self-Figuration: N. Scott Momaday's The Way to Rainy Mountain and Gloria Anzaldúa's Borderlands / La Frontera*. José Liste Noya: *Memory in Motion: The “Double Narratives” of Paul Auster's The Invention of Solitude and Samuel R. Delany's The Motion of Light in Water*. David Río: *Autobiographical Writing on Politics in the Sin State: Latina and Basque American Perspectives*.

ÚLTIMOS TÍTULOS

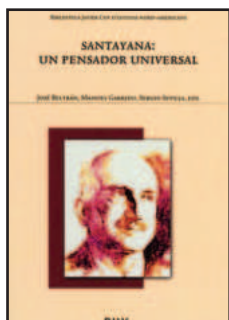
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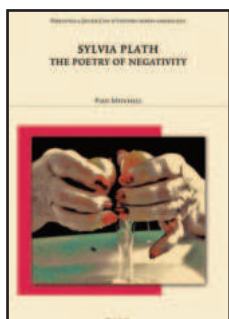
<https://www.uv.es/bibjcoy>

81. José Beltrán, Manuel Garrido, Sergio Sevilla, eds. *Santayana, un pensador universal*



Nacido en Madrid de padres españoles, pero educado en Boston, donde alcanzó fama como poeta y filósofo, viajero excepcional, Jorge/George Santayana (1863-1952) es un pensador universal, él mismo supo convertirse en persona y lugar de encuentros, tendiendo puentes entre ambas orillas del Atlántico y estableciendo un diálogo, que continúa vivo, entre las tradiciones europea y norteamericana, con una notable presencia en latinoamérica. En su extensa obra se logró lo una síntesis de lo más fértil de ambas culturas: la europea de la antigüedad, la tradición y el clasicismo, y la estadounidense del pragmatismo y la modernidad. En estos momentos asistimos a una creciente presencia de sus textos y a una restitución de su pensamiento en el panorama de la filosofía internacional. Este libro muestra la actualidad de Santayana desde la universalidad de su pensamiento, la singularidad de su filosofía y la originalidad de su dimensión estética.

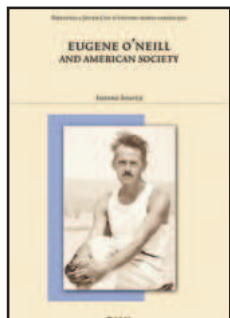
82. Paul Mitchell, *Sylvia Plath: The Poetry of Negativity*



Sylvia Plath is one of the most well-known and controversial poets of the twentieth century. Since her death in 1963, the critical debate about her work has been animated and sometimes even hostile; yet it has also become constrained by an unnecessary emphasis on the facticity of the poet's suicide. *Sylvia Plath: The Poetry of Negativity* illustrates how reading Plath from an alternative perspective, one that utilizes Julia Kristeva's theory of poetic language, allows for an appreciation of the poems that goes beyond the biographical by placing emphasis instead on the texts and, in so doing, engaging with the 'I' persona as a complex and unstable heuristic device. By exploring the poems in terms of their *signifiante* (or process) rather than focusing exclusively on their signification (the communication of coherent meaning),

it explores the manner in which Plath's work produces a crisis of speaking subjectivity and, from this, the 'revolutionary' nature of the poetic voice emerges.

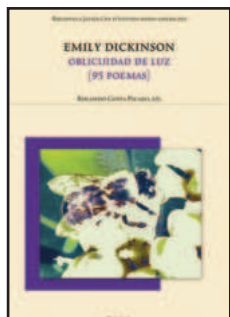
83. Yvonne Shafer, *Eugene O'Neill and American Society*



In her twelfth book Yvonne Shafer once more focuses on Eugene O'Neill. Her previous book "Performing O'Neill" presented fascinating information about the actors (James Earl Jones, Jason Robards, etc.) who created his roles. *Eugene O'Neill and American Society* moves away from the familiar biographical analysis of the plays to such aspects as his anti-war stand, his interaction with African-Americans, his surprising love for musicals, and his characterization of women. Shafer has been involved in theatre as an actress, a director, a reviewer, and a scholar. She has lectured and taught in such varied places as China, Norway and (as a Fulbright Scholar) Belgium. Her performance of "Eugene O'Neill On Stage"

has delighted audiences in Germany, the United States, the Universitat de València and elsewhere in Spain.

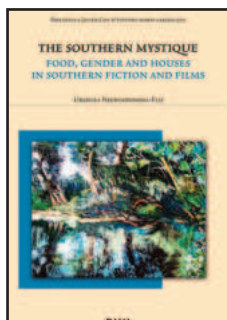
84. Emily Dickinson, *Oblicuidad de luz (95 poemas)*, ed. Rolando Costa Picazo



Emily Dickinson es la primera gran poeta estadounidense. Desconocida como escritora en vida, ya que apenas publicó, sus poemas son de una originalidad desusada, de gran economía y control, de una sintaxis y puntuación únicas, a la par que de gran inspiración y profundidad, sobre temas existenciales como la identidad, la inmortalidad, la vida y la muerte, pero también de amor y pasión, y de reverencia por la naturaleza. Traducir a Dickinson es aceptar un reto arriesgado que sólo los traductores más sagaces son capaces de llevar a término con dignidad. *Oblicuidad de luz: Emily Dickinson, 95 poemas* presenta la selección, traducción y anotación de sus casi cien poemas más representativos, a cargo de Rolando Costa Picazo, profesor de Literatura Norteamericana en la Facultad de Filosofía y Letras

de la Universidad de Buenos Aires, miembro de Número de la Academia Argentina de Letras y Correspondiente de la Real Academia Española, investigador destacado de autores imprescindibles de las letras estadounidenses y renombrado traductor, con más de cien títulos traducidos del inglés al español, premiado en numerosas ocasiones por la brillantez de sus versiones. En *Oblicuidad de luz* leemos a Dickinson a través de la sabiduría lingüística y sensibilidad literaria de Costa Picazo, un traductor que hace justicia a la estatura poética de la reclusa de Amherst y la acerca a los lectores en español del tercer milenio.

85. Urzula Niewiadomska-Flis, *The Southern Mystique: Food, Gender and Houses in Southern Fiction and Films*



The Southern Mystique: Food, Gender and Houses in Southern Fiction and Films makes use of feminist literary criticism, psychoanalytic theory, theories of space, subject formation, grotesque, and carnival to reconsider constructing Southern gender as presented in the twentieth-century fiction and movies. Three conceptual issues guide the research. Firstly, Southern women can work within and against their society's discourses of gender through culinary practices. Secondly, through the agency of female friendship women can transgress their place prescribed by patriarchy. Thirdly, in order to command gender construction women have to challenge patriarchal protection of the feminine and defy the rules of confinement of femininity in the domestic space. Thus, this volume interrogates the material

effects of Southern myths on constructions and negotiations of Southern womanhood against the white, male, heterosexist normativity of Southern culture.

86. Fernando Savater, *Acerca de Santayana*, ed. José Beltrán y Daniel Moreno



Acerca de Santayana es el testimonio de una amistad intelectual —la de Fernando Savater hacia Jorge/George Santayana— cultivada a lo largo de décadas. El volumen recopila los textos que Savater ha escrito sobre Santayana, un “pensador privado” que destaca en nuestro panorama cultural por pertenecer a una raza poco frecuente en la historia del pensamiento contemporáneo: la de quienes reflexionaron filosóficamente para liberar sus vidas y no para dar clase de filosofía. Este libro resume la pasión de ambos por la filosofía e invita —combinando buenas dosis de lucidez e ironía— a que disfrutemos de la compañía de dos pensadores extraordinarios.

87. Carmen Castilla, *Diario de viaje a Estados Unidos: un año en Smith College (1921-1922)*, ed. Santiago López-Ríos Moreno



En este libro se publica, por primera vez, uno de los escasos testimonios autobiográficos que hasta el momento se han localizado de pensionados en el extranjero de la Junta para Ampliación de Estudios. Carmen Castilla (1895-1979), una maestra que había establecido una estrecha relación con María de Maeztu en la Residencia de Señoritas, en virtud de un acuerdo entre esta institución y Smith College —y gracias también al apoyo de la JAE— viajó a esta elitista universidad para mujeres de Massachusetts durante el curso 1921-1922 para enseñar español y estudiar ella misma zoología, genética y pedagogía. El diario que escribió durante esos meses, que se saca a luz con un amplio estudio introductorio, edición crítica

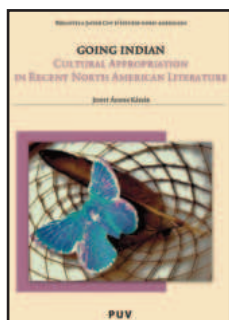
y notas del profesor Santiago López-Ríos Moreno e ilustrado con numerosas fotografías inéditas, constituye un texto fascinante tanto como documento autobiográfico femenino íntimo como por su visión crítica de lo que una compañera de Carmen Castilla en la Residencia de Señoritas llamó «la América de las ilusiones».

88. Emily Dickinson, *La poesía temprana de Emily Dickinson: Cuadernillos 2 & 3*, ed. Paul S. Derrick, Nicolás Estévez, Gabriel Torres Chalk



Este es el segundo volumen de un proyecto cuyo objetivo es la traducción y lectura crítica de los cuarenta cuadernillos de Emily Dickinson, unas secuencias poéticas cortas que plantean una serie de preguntas fascinantes acerca de las intenciones y los logros artísticos de esta misteriosa autora norteamericana. Cada cuadernillo va acompañado de un comentario crítico con el fin de explicar los poemas, examinar la organización y estructura de los cuadernillos y, finalmente, establecer el papel temático que juega cada uno de estos poemas tempranos dentro de la obra global de la poeta.

89. Judit Ágnes Kádár, *Going Indian: Cultural Appropriation in Recent North American Literature*



The literary crop since the publication of T.Berger's *Little Big Man* (1964) and R.Kroetch's *Gone Indian* (1973) shows unceasing interest in the phenomenon of white persons going Indian or Native, as well as a new excitement about challenging the Cooperian tradition of crossing the color lines in seemingly non-racist narratives. This book examines how the "intellectual playground" created by the American Berger, Fergus, Larsen, O'Toole, Erdrich and Frazier and the Canadian Kroetsch, Kreiner, Ruffo and Hunter provides postcolonial biographies of such "slippery characters" as Sir William Johnson, Mary Jemison, May Dodd, and Archie Belaney/Grey Owl, or fictional ones such as Jack Crabb and Jeremy Sadness. The texts analyzed here pose questions related the construction of identity, fictive kinship

and symbolic ethnicity, and the motivations and impulses underlying going/playing "Other." They also entail broader questions, including the processes and implications of transculturation and the epistemology of race relations. Related findings of cross-cultural and narrative psychology are incorporated, offering an expansion on significant earlier cultural and literary criticism (Berkhofer, Vine and Philip Deloria, Torgovich, Gouldie, Huhndorf, Vizenor, Kawash and Wernitznig) with an interdisciplinary understanding of how whiteness as racial dominance operates in shifting social paradigms and how contemporary literary texts challenge this dominance.

90. Lisa Ann Twomey, *Hemingway en la crítica y en la ficción de la España de postguerra*



La imagen de Ernest Hemingway en la barrera, con boina y la mirada puesta en el ruedo, ha llegado a ser un tópico en el recuerdo colectivo del autor en España, aunque no es una fiel representación de lo que era para los españoles de esa época el norteamericano. Después de muchas décadas sin conocer la narrativa del Premio Nobel de 1954, los españoles empezaron a leer sus obras en los años cincuenta y los críticos y escritores a analizarla y valorarla. Sin olvidar su afición por los toros y su imagen popular, este libro documenta la recepción de la obra del norteamericano en la postguerra y revela las razones por las que Hemingway ocupa un lugar importante en la historia de la crítica y la creación literaria de la España de la segunda mitad del siglo XX.

ÚLTIMAS PUBLICACIONES INSTITUTO FRANKLIN - UAH

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Rewriting Terror: The 9/11 Terrorists in American Fiction

Estelibro, escrito por Juanjo Bermúdez de Castro, trata sobre el modo de concebir discursivamente a los terroristas responsables de los ataques del 11 de septiembre de 2001 que se ha impuesto en los EEUU como el procedimiento habitual por estar respaldado por instituciones gubernamentales, medios de comunicación mayoritarios y por la mayoría de novelistas, directores de cine, guionistas de series de televisión y dibujantes de cómics que han re-visitado y re-creado el acontecimiento histórico del 11-S a través de la ficción.

TRIBUNA NORTEAMERICANA



Tribuna Norteamericana nº 10 (noviembre 2012)

Esta nueva edición de *Tribuna Norteamericana* trata sobre las relaciones entre España y Estados Unidos e incluye los siguientes artículos: La dura factura de la crisis sobre la imagen española en los EE.UU. de Pablo Pardo, España - Estados Unidos: una relación de futuro de José Herrera y Claves para una Política Hispana: cómo fortalecer el papel de España en EE.UU. de Daniel Ureña.

COLECCIÓN CAMINO REAL



George Washington Gómez

Esta obra es la traducción al español de la novela del mismo nombre del autor chicano Américo Paredes. Como su propio nombre indica, la obra muestra el conflicto de identidad que sufre el protagonista, un joven que crece en territorio anglo-texano, particularmente con respecto al sistema educativo.

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DIALÓGO ATLÁNTICO INSTITUTO FRANKLIN - UAH

Diálogo Atlántico Diálogo Atlántico es una sección dedicada a la actualidad política de Estados Unidos comentada en forma de editorial por el Instituto Franklin – UAH. También se puede recibir semanalmente por correo electrónico. Si desea recibir este editorial gratuitamente póngase en contacto con Ana Lariño: ana.larino@institutofranklin.net.

CONVOCATORIAS DE BECAS Y PREMIOS

Javier Coy Biennial Research Awards

SAAS wishes to recognize the research achievements of its members through the Javier Coy Biennial Research Awards. The goal of these awards is to promote high-quality scholarship in the field of American Studies, and to celebrate the originality and excellence of research carried out within SAAS. All SAAS members are eligible to submit work in the following categories:

Best Monograph: This award is open to original volumes (joint authorship is also possible) published in 2011 or 2012. A monograph is here understood as a single volume on a specific subject, containing original research material. Literary translations, as well as editions, are excluded. The endowment of this award is 700 Euros.

Best Edited Volume: This award seeks to recognize outstanding edited collections of articles published in 2011 or 2012 in book form. The endowment of this award is 500 Euros.

Best Journal Article: This award is intended to honor original research articles published in 2011 or 2012 in a specialized research journal of international scope and high impact rate. The endowment of this award is 300 Euros.

Best REN Article: This award is open to original research articles published in the *Revista de Estudios Norteamericanos*. For this particular type of award, all the articles appearing in REN since the last SAAS conference (a biennial period) will be considered, unless otherwise stated by the authors; therefore, authors do not need to send copies to the committee. The endowment of this award is 200 Euros.

The authors, who necessarily have to be SAAS members at the time of submission, should send three copies of their work to the conference organizing committee—with the exception of the REN award. Only one item across all categories can be submitted by each member. Works previously submitted for other awards are excluded. Once the Javier Coy awards are announced, the volumes/articles will be returned to authors.

Following the SAAS board's agreement, the composition of the jury will not be made public. The jury's decision, which is unappealable, will be made public during the members' general assembly at the biennial conference.

The next deadline for submitting works is January 15th 2013, and the awards will be made public at the 11th SAAS conference, to be held at the University of La Laguna in March 2013.

Fellowship Opportunities in American Art

The Smithsonian American Art Museum and its Renwick Gallery invite applications for research fellowships in art and visual culture of the United States. A variety of predoctoral, postdoctoral, and senior fellowships are available. Fellowships are residential and support independent and dissertation research. The stipend for a one-year fellowship is \$30,000 for predoctoral fellows or \$45,000 for senior and postdoctoral fellows, plus generous research and travel allowances. The standard term of residency is twelve months, but shorter terms will be considered; stipends are prorated for periods of less than twelve months. Deadline: January 15, 2013. Contact: Fellowship Office, American Art Museum, (202) 633-8353, AmericanArtFellowships@si.edu

EAAS Grants

The European Association for American Studies provides travel grants for postgraduate students in the Humanities and Social Sciences who are registered for a higher research degree at any European university. There are two grants: the Transatlantic Grant and the Intra-European Grant. Four to six scholarships are awarded each year. The following information is extracted from the EAAS website.

Transatlantic Grant

The Transatlantic Grant will permit the holder to conduct research which illuminates some aspect of the relationship between the United States and Europe, or between the United States and a country or countries within Europe, in a designated university in the United States. The term of the grant will be between three weeks (minimum) and eight weeks (maximum). Successful applicants will receive a grant intended to cover round trip travel and some of the living expenses. Only students registered for a Ph.D. are eligible to apply for the Transatlantic Grants.

Intra-European Grant

The Intra-European Grant will allow the recipient to conduct research for a period of up to four weeks in an American Studies Center or university library in Europe. Graduate students who are registered either for a Ph.D. or a Master's degree by research are eligible to apply for Intra-European Grants.

Applications must be made on the official form and should include written confirmation from the host institution that the researcher will have access to the necessary resource materials, and a letter from the student's academic supervisor. Applicants will be required to supply a detailed estimate of the cost of their visit, including the cost of travel, subsistence, and incidentals. They should also state the minimum amount of money needed to make the trip possible. Applicants are encouraged to seek supporting or matching funding wherever possible.

Grant recipients will be responsible for making their own arrangements for travel and accommodation. Travel must be completed within twelve months of the grantee being notified of the award. Grantees will be required to submit a report to EAAS within thirty days of returning from their research visit.

Updated information can be found at www.eaas.eu/travel_grants.htm

CONVOCATORIAS DE CONGRESOS

LEJOS ES AQUÍ / FAR AWAY IS HERE INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON WRITING AND MIGRATIONS

Cáceres, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Universidad de Extremadura
2012, November 22-23-24

In the last five hundred years European history has been marked by migrations. Millions of people have continuously moved in more or less consistent flows, in different phases determined by social and economic cycles, from the conquest of the New World, to individual and mass displacements in the Modern and Contemporary Age: the so-called Great Migration in the second half of the 19th century, the intra-European migrations driven by the Fordist economy after WWII, the Globalization Age recent migrations.

Migrant writing is the ideal place where cultural relations take place and can be observed. A wide range of textual genres and sub-genres have appeared, from autobiographies (diaries, memoirs, etc.) to fictional works (novels and short stories), drama, and poetry. The same thing can be said about the following generations: migrants' "children" and "grandchildren" have enhanced and internalized the conflicts caused by their twofold cultural identity, disclosing new dynamics that have produced specific textual typologies and literary traditions grounded on cultural hybridization. These phenomena have been studied by several disciplines (sociology, linguistics, comparative literature) through studies that draw on all of them, sometimes building new wider fields of study (that is the case of the so-called Ethnic Literature in the USA, which encompasses a range of works, from the early autobiographical writings by Scandinavian, Italian, and Jewish immigrants of the late 19th century, to the more recent Chicano and American-Asian literature), sometimes focusing on the cultural and literary production of a single group (Turks in Germany, Maghribians in France since the 1960s, and so on). On the other hand, as for Southern Europe, both the emigrants' textual production (Spaniards in Germany and France, Italians in America, Australia and Germany, etc.) and the new immigrants' writings have begun to be studied only recently. Such a complex factual and critical landscape needs a comprehensive analysis, a wider framework in which scholars from different countries can put together ideas, experiences and results in order to reach advanced and more general conclusions through a comparative approach. Therefore, it is important to lay the foundations of a knowledge network in this field, all the more since Spain has recently become an immigrant country, and scholars can observe in "real time" the onset of migrant writing and new hybrid literary traditions.

Consequently, we want the Lejos es aquí / Far Away Is Here International Symposium to be a seminal conference for the development of the study of migrant literature and a contribution to a European debate that began a long time ago. Therefore, it is important that researchers who work in this field may contact

the best scholars in other countries.

The symposium welcomes submissions from the broad ranges of related topics including, but not limited to the following:

Migrant literary production.
Migrant autobiographies and travel literature.
Second and third generation migrant hybrid writing.
Linguistic aspects in migrant writing.
Bilingualism as the outcome of migration.
Cultural context and identity conflicts in migrations.
Images in migrants writing.
Old and new migrations compared.
Interculturality, transnationality and deterritorialization as the outcome of migration.
Building writing traditions in immigrant minorities.
Immigrant writing in the framework of European literature.
Migrant writings' influence in the concept of Weltliteratur.
Historiography of the new migrant literatures.
National canons and migrations: national philologies' crisis.

The Symposium languages will be Spanish and English. The Symposium schedule will consist of plenary lectures and 20-minute papers.

Deadline for submission is September 5, 2012. Please send a 250-300 word abstract in English or Spanish to: migraciones@unex.es. The Organizing Committee will answer the applications on September 26.

The Symposium fee is 90 euros for lecturers and 20 euros for attendees.

The Scientific Committee will make a selection of papers for publication.

Webpage: <http://www.unex.es/eweb/migraciones>

JONATHAN FRANZEN: IDENTITY AND CRISIS OF THE AMERICAN NOVEL

International Symposium
University of Córdoba, Spain, 18-19 April 2013

For good or bad, American novelist Jonathan Franzen enjoys today a centrality in American popular culture which suggests the resurgence of older modes of interaction between the literary and the public, modes

adapted to times in which novelists had iconic status in the public sphere and something like a say in political issues. To be sure, Franzen's service record features well-deserved canon-making recognition of his creative achievements (the 2001 National Book Award for *The Corrections*), but it is also punctuated with episodes of media-bolstered visibility—the debate over the publication of his *Harper's* essay, the so-called Oprahgate, President Obama's raving over *Freedom*, or the recent appearance of his face in the *Time Magazine* cover over the heading "Great American Novelist"—which cast an uneasy shadow over his strictly literary merits. Yet, is there such a thing as a strictly literary merit when such a gorgeously unreliable creature as the "American Novel" is at stake? The uneven and at times misleading critical reception of Franzen's novels throws into relief this and other related questions. Is a refurbished social realism the new direction of American prose fiction? How far into political commitment should this realism go? Is the post-modern experimentalism of the 1960s and 1970s definitely over? To what extent is academic criticism, currently fuelled by diverse sociological, political and thematic agendas (identity politics, gender studies, trauma studies, ethical turn), likely to respond to Franzen's allegedly white, male, Midwestern and shyly progressive worldview?

More importantly, how many traditions of American fiction are now allowed to coexist? In his recent *New Yorker* essay on Edith Wharton, Franzen acknowledges the existence of at least four "genealogies" of American fiction: "Henry James and the modernists, Mark Twain and the vernacularists, Herman Melville and the postmoderns" and a less noticed line, vital to Wharton, connecting Howells to Fitzgerald and Sinclair Lewis and thence to Jay McInerney and Jane Smiley. Which of these genealogies are actually vital to Jonathan Franzen himself? What is, in other words, his family line? Franzen has persistently claimed natural descent from Don DeLillo and somewhat elective affinities with David Foster Wallace, but he may well be abundantly—and unwittingly—indebted to John Updike and Tom Wolfe. Thus, how should we read both these genealogical claims and his critical conception of the role the novel should play in contemporary society, swaying between (aesthetic) innovation and (public) intervention?

The organisers will welcome **proposals for 25-minute papers in English** on any of the areas mentioned above. Suggested (merely indicative) topics include:

The distinctive and specific merits of Franzen's narrative oeuvre: stylistic innovation, formal construction, ethico-cognitive innovation, socio-political insight.

From postmodernism to realism. Gaps and continuities between on the one hand, *The Twenty Seventh City* (1988) and *Strong Motion* (1992), and on the other hand, *The Corrections* (2001) and *Freedom* (2010).

Thematic recurrences in Franzen's novels: flawed communities; conspiracy; environmentalism.

The autobiographical dimension of his work, with special attention to *The Discomfort Zone*.

The way his novels confirm or disavow the terms of the debate over the necessity of a new realism in contemporary fiction.

The reception of Jonathan Franzen: reviews, interviews, articles.

The relation between Franzen's novels and his non-fictional work.

Against capitalism and instrumental reason: the genuine political reach of Franzen's novels, where the issue of environmentalism is deployed, according to some critics, at the expense of other more pressing concerns.

The affiliation of his novels to an existing genealogy of American fiction.

The relation between Franzen and the Gaddis-Pynchon-Coover generation of American masters, involving his ambivalent attitude towards postmodern experimentalism.

DeLillo-Franzen and the anxieties of influence.

Generational issues. Franzen and his contemporaries (David Foster Wallace, Michael Chabon, Jeffrey Eugenides, Dave Eggers...).

Jonathan Franzen's position vis-à-vis the "Great American Novel".

Red herrings?: a) Franzen, Tolstoy and European realism b) The German connection: Rilke, Kafka, Mann, and Continental Modernism c) Self-proclaimed indebtedness to Alice Munro, Christina Stead, Flannery O'Connor, Jane Smiley and Paula Fox.

The relation between Franzen's novels and non-US-centred narrative modes like post-colonial fiction, regional fiction, international novel, fiction of globalization...

One thing remains clear to us: American fiction today is a much more complex and heterogeneous field than this perhaps futile debate appears to admit. Furthermore, this heterogeneity is manifestly systemic, presenting us with at least three autonomous realms—with associated markets, readerships, receptions—of symbolic-capital production, to wit, the realm of best-selling popularity, the realm of academic reception, and a conjectural and unstructured third realm of private endeavour and ambition. It seems that the fate of Jonathan Franzen is invariably lured by the somewhat incompatible attractions that these three realms would appear to provide. This notwithstanding, the organizers of this symposium believe that Franzen's novels command genuine aesthetic respect and deserve critical attention geared to their singularity. They also believe that this singularity may have unpredictable ethical and cognitive effects beyond authorial pre-programming and reader expectation. Hopefully, balanced discussion of Franzen's work may both help restore its genuine singularity and shed light on the ongoing debate over the identity (scope, place, aim, diversity and crisis) of American fiction.

Please submit your 500 word proposals by February 15th, 2013 to Paula Martín (paula.martin@uco.es). Abstracts should include your name, institution, e-mail address, and the title of your proposed paper.

Organizers:

Paula Martín Salván

Julián Jiménez Heffernan

Jesús Blanco Hidalgo

María J. López

ACTS OF REMEMBRANCE IN CONTEMPORARY NARRATIVES IN ENGLISH: OPENING THE PAST FOR THE FUTURE

Organized by the research team "Contemporary Narrative in English"

<http://cne.literatureresearch.net>

Departamento de Filología Inglesa y Alemana

Universidad de Zaragoza (Spain)

24th-26th April 2013

Memorials, commemorations, testimonies, memoirs, narratives that attempt to excavate traumatic memories from their ruins and ashes or to reconstruct an all too painful individual or collective historical past ... All these acts of remembrance have become hallmarks of our contemporary age: the age of trauma, victims and perpetrators. And all of these exert an essential role in bearing witness to the omission, presence, and even (re)-imagining of certain events, either hegemonic or marginal, thus posing challenges to memory's inherent selectivity and distortions. The presence of past traumatic memories can be as revealing as unsettling; it may open new paths of ontological and epistemological enquiry and, yet, simultaneously or alternatively, close all venues of collective and personal remembrance. However poignant and overwhelming the traces of the past may be, particularly in the act of remembering moments of rupture, displacement and extreme suffering, such remains must be acknowledged and embraced for any possible future to exist. If we are to move beyond a teleological and linear conception of memory in which pain and suffering are left out for the sake of historical and personal progress, attention should be paid to those remnants as they may become the germ for new perspectives on social and political interventions. By approaching acts of remembrance – and hope – as creative acts of rethinking and appropriating the past, this conference seeks to address the tension between a past that has been forcibly silenced and a present that, as Walter Benjamin reminds us, must acknowledge that "there is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism" (*Theses on the Philosophy of History*, VII). The search for woven patterns of remembrance between past and present will hopefully result in more productive sites of experience from which to forge alternative paradigms of remembering and of building and living the future.

We welcome contributions that explore these and other related issues.

Suggested topics for discussion include, but are not limited to:

- Memory and testimony narratives in contemporary literatures in English.
- Exile and memory.
- Memory traces: past, present and future acts of remembrance.
- Loss, mourning, commemoration and ritual.
- Antidepressant narratives: rewriting melancholia and sorrow.
- The ethics and politics of productive mourning in contemporary narratives in English.

- Narrative modes and genres of excess: indirect representations of trauma.
- A poetics of telling: formal experimentation and the depathologization of victimhood.
- Feminism and remembrance.
- Collective remembrance and institutional powers.
- Queer remembrance and the subversion of heteronormative modes of narration.
- Affects, ethics and aesthetics in contemporary narratives in English.
- Narratives of resilience and recovery.
- Narratives of disability and body politics.
- Narratives of violence.
- The use and abuse of trauma as a new cultural paradigm.

Abstracts between 400-500 words should be sent to the organizers by December 1st, 2012. Author information is to be sent in a separate sheet, including name, filiation, contact address, a bio-note and a paper title.

Constanza del Río (crio@unizar.es)
Maite Escudero (mescuder@unizar.es)
Dpto. de Filología Inglesa y Alemana
Facultad de Filosofía y Letras. Campus San Francisco
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50009 Zaragoza, Spain

STAGING AMERICAN SOUNDS

UNIVERSIDAD COMPLUTENSE DE MADRID, 9-10 MAY 2013

Can a nation be heard? If so, what are the sounds distinctively American? Following previous editions of the international conferences *Staging American....* bringing together scholars from Europe and the US, we propose to reconvene to open a scholarly discussion on the sounds of America. Starting from the premise that no text can be read without hearing something, let us consider what these sounds might be and what it is that makes them American if at all. Does writing, for instance, have an accent? On a visit to the America in 1904-5, Henry James thought the American accent a travesty of what speech should sound like. Speech, he thought, should respond to a tone-standard set by phonemes on the page or else become a mere noise. Whether James was right or not, reading is always a performance of the sounds of writing, the stage its literal and metaphoric battleground. But there is more, the nature of the spoken word on a stage already gives it a presence, a life that, however tenuous, acquires, in the evanescent

moment of a live performance, an extremely powerful political dimension. As soon as a word is spoken on the stage it is tested in a way that no other medium demands: does it proclaim its phenomenological authenticity as an actual voice of its own, or is it always the pre-recorded message of writing that must necessarily coerce what one *can* say? But there may be a third way: the way of sounds dissociated from both speech and writing. Among other instances, the soundscapes in the plays of Sarah Ruhl seem to suggest that technologies of sound are essential in contemporary theatre; on the other hand, the absence of voice and sounds can be as *telling* as what can be actually heard, as Beckett and Cage suggested decades ago. But would it be “American”?

The term “staging” should not necessarily be understood with reference to the theatre. Suggested topics of research could include although need not be limited to:

- Echoes in space
- The Sound of Silence
- Voices and noises
- The sounds of reading
- Closet drama
- The arrangement of production and recording of sounds
- Sound technologies: radio, film, theatre.
- The transformation of texts into scripts
- Literary acoustics: The sound of literary and poetic texts
- The politics of sounding/Voicing the silence of the oppressed
- The musical representation of a nation: hymns, songs chants.
- American musicals and national identity
- Technology's role in American identity
- The politics of sound as class, gender, and ethnic marker

The deadline for the submission of paper proposals is December 1st, 2012. 300-words abstracts should be written in English in the form of a Microsoft Word Document saved as “American Sounds+ your name”. Your submission should include: the paper's title, a short biographical note (150 words), your academic affiliation and contact information.

Send to: fvericat@filol.ucm.es

Participants for the conference will be selected by February 15. Following the conference, we will invite participants to submit essays for possible publication.

Scientific and organizing committee: Ana Fernández-Caparrós, Noelia Hernando Real and Fabio L. Vericat.

THE VIEWING OF POLITICS AND THE POLITICS OF VIEWING: THEATRE CHALLENGES IN THE AGE OF GLOBALIZED COMMUNITIES

18-21 April 2013

The School of English of Aristotle University, Thessaloniki, Greece, in co-operation with the Hellenic Association for American Studies (HELAAS), invites scholars to submit proposals for the international theatre conference to be held in Thessaloniki in 18-21 April, 2013.

Each era brings along its own problems. Our globalized world, with its conflicts, failed promises, economic challenges, recession, vast immigration, state corruption, ecological and environmental problems, provides more than enough challenges for theatre people to face, East and West. This international conference aims to explore the role of theatre in a world characterized by radical transformations and mediated transgressions. As a living experience, theatre has always provided the audience with the unavoidable confrontation with a society in transition, engaging provocatively with questions of identity formation, (trans)national consciousness, cultural negotiations, globalizing processes, political antagonisms.

We invite proposals that explore theatre's potential to incorporate politics and influence audiences. Scholars, researchers, and artists are invited to submit 250-word abstracts for papers or practical presentations or panels by February 15, 2012. Topics may include among others:

Politics as theatre/ Theatre as politics

Theatre activism in a performative society

Theatre and democracy

Theatre radicals in an age of global conformism/ in a world dominated by multinational and corporate giants

Theatre innovations and theatre viewing

Audiences and mobs/ Trans-audiences

Spectatorship/witnessing and new performance forms

Politics of space/place

Festival audiences: search for innovation or homogeneity?

The future of theatre/ recession and theatre policy

Please address **e-mails** to: spats@enl.auth.gr
detsi@enl.auth.gr

Organizing Committee

Prof. Savas Patsalidis, School of English, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece

Assistant Prof. Zoe Detsi, School of English, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki Virginia Dakari, Ph. D.

Student, School of English, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Conference website: www.enl.auth.gr/theatreconference

BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR AMERICAN STUDIES 58TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE 18-21 APRIL 2013

Hosted by the College of Humanities at the University of Exeter

www.ex.ac.uk/humanities/research/conferences/baas2013

Plenary Speakers

Paul Gilroy

Anthony Giddens Professor of Social Theory at the London School of Economics

Dolores Hayden

Professor of Architecture, Urbanism and American Studies at Yale University

Anders Stephanson

Andrew and Virginia Rudd Family Foundation Professor of History at Columbia University

There is no overarching theme to the conference, and papers and panel proposals are welcomed on any subject that falls under the remit of American Studies. We invite proposals from individuals and from other interest groups including associations linked to BAAS, such as the APG, BGEAH, BrANCH, and HOTCUS. Half a century after 1963, we invite proposals inspired by the events of that year and the tumultuous decade that followed. 2013 also represents the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation and we welcome suggestions for related papers and panels.

Proposals for 20-minute presentations should be a maximum of 250 words and include a provisional title. Proposals by two or more people sharing a common theme are warmly invited and we welcome panels that cross disciplinary boundaries. The conference organisers hope to continue the initiative shown at previous BAAS Annual Conferences by scheduling roundtable discussions and innovative panel presentations, and we encourage such proposals as appropriate.

All proposals should be submitted to baas2013@exeter.ac.uk by 1 November 2012.

American Studies has a long-standing presence at the University of Exeter. The research interests of staff include transatlantic literary relations, American criminality, film noir, the literature of the suburbs, the Hollywood blockbuster, US immigration, Seattle in the 1990s, the American musical, the culture of the

American South, Irish American identities and literature, childhood in America, the Ku Klux Klan, and contemporary American comics. The University holds several major resources that are of interest to American Studies scholars, notably the American Music Collection (one of the largest archives of American popular music outside the United States) and the Bill Douglas Centre for the History of Cinema and Popular Culture.

Exeter is located 12 miles from the sea, in the county of Devon, home to several Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Dartmoor National Park and the Jurassic Coast, a World Heritage Site.

For further information, please visit the conference website:

www.ex.ac.uk/humanities/research/conferences/baas2013

or contact the conference organisers on:

baas2013@exeter.ac.uk

CFPs: REVISTAS DE INVESTIGACIÓN

CALL FOR PAPERS **REVISTA DE ESTUDIOS NORTEAMERICANOS, VOL 17 (2013)**

Contributions are invited for the 17th Volume (2013) of *Revista de Estudios Norteamericanos*.

Revista de Estudios Norteamericanos is an international scholarly peer-reviewed English-language journal which publishes papers and reviews on diverse aspects of U.S. Studies, mainly literary, cultural, historical, artistic or critical, and which has been instrumental in furthering research and publication in American Studies since 1992. The journal, published annually by the University of Seville and financed by the Spanish Association for American Studies, welcomes papers from scholars whose research meets the scientific criteria established by the journal and summarized in the Guidelines included at the end of each volume. Contributions should follow the formal instructions for submission also included in the Guidelines for Authors, and will be anonymously evaluated by two different advisors according to the criteria specified in the Guidelines for Referees. A third expert may be consulted if advisable. Authors will receive a full report of the referees' reasons for their decision.

Revista de Estudios Norteamericanos can be accessed at:
http://www.publius.us.es/estudios_norteamERICANOS (open access)

Revista de Estudios Norteamericanos is indexed in DIALNET, LATINDEX, CINDOC (IEDCYT), DICE, CIRC, MIRA, RESH and MLA.

The deadline for submission is September 15th, 2013.

Correspondence should be addressed to:
Revista de Estudios Norteamericanos
Departamento de Literatura Inglesa y Norteamericana
Facultad de Filología
c/ Palos de la Frontera, s/n
Universidad de Sevilla
41004 Sevilla
Spain
Email address: ren@us.es



LECTORA: REVISTA DE DONES I TEXTUALITAT, fundada en 1995, es un espacio de debate y estudio de los cruces y matices entre el feminismo y las diversas formas de textualidad dentro de la cultura. Publicación impresa, multilingüe, con periodicidad anual. *Lectora* está indexada en: Ulrich's, Latindex, MLA, DICE, RESH, ISOC, CIRC, Carhus Plus 2010

SOLICITUD DE ORIGINALES:

Lectora 19 (2013): Miscelánea.

Esta revista anima a los autores/as a publicar artículos que tengan como hilo conductor los estudios de género y de mujeres, ya sea en su vertiente teórica, ya sea aplicados al análisis de cualquier forma de textualidad.

Los artículos, escritos en catalán, español, gallego, euskera, francés, inglés, italiano o portugués, deberán seguir las normas de la revista y ser enviados antes del 15 de diciembre de 2013 a la siguiente dirección: lectora@ub.edu

Lectora 20 (2014): Dossier LA FIGURA DE "THE NEIGHBOR" ("EL VECINO/LA VECINA") EN LA LITERATURA DEL SIGLO XIX

Los textos literarios del siglo diecinueve reflejaron, a la vez que contribuyeron a forjar consolidar y diseminar, categorías de conocimiento y organización social tales como nación, estado, pueblo, ciudad y vecindario que han determinado y continúan determinando formaciones ideológicas esenciales en la cultura occidental a lo largo de los siglos veinte y veintiuno. Los cambiantes conceptos de tiempo y espacio examinados por Benedict Anderson en *Imagined Communities* confluyeron en la creación y circulación de nacionalismos que articularon las motivaciones que empujaban a los ciudadanos a vivir y a morir por sus naciones, así como a odiar y a matar a aquellos considerados extraños o extranjeros. La nación/estado se estructuró, en el siglo diecinueve, como un colectivo de seres humanos que ocupan un territorio común que se debían defender de las amenazas de una posible intrusión de fuera del espacio común. El espacio común, por lo tanto, se entiende desde entonces como un espacio delimitado de cohabitación y de cercanía física y/o ideológica en el que los ciudadanos son corresponsables de la seguridad de los vecinos en lo nacional. Según esta articulación, así pues, la tranquilidad nacional y el bienestar común se cimientan en la defensa de la obligación del amor al vecino como a uno mismo y por lo tanto de la incorporación de "el Otro" para que éste o ésta pase a convertirse en un otro. Emmanuel

Lévinas problematizó el concepto del vecino al observar que también hay otros vecinos a los que incorporar: “Si estoy con el Otro, le debo todo; pero hay alguien más. ¿Sé qué es mi vecino en relación con otra persona? ¿Sé si alguien más tiene un entendimiento con él o su víctima? ¿Quién es mi vecino? Es consecuentemente necesario sopesar, pensar, juzgar, al comparar lo incomparable” (Ethique et infini). Y Slavoj Žižek fue más allá al recordarnos que incluso dentro de lo nacional, hay estilos de vida que preferimos no aceptar.

El número 20 de Lectora solicita contribuciones que analicen textos literarios del siglo XIX que desafíen o cuestionen, desde la perspectiva del género y/o la sexualidad, la violencia ideológica de los discursos homogeneizadores religiosos, étnicos, raciales, patrióticos, lingüísticos, culturales, tradicionales y/o de clase social en las ideologías nacionales de la vecindad y de lo común en la nación.

Los artículos, escritos en catalán, español, gallego, euskera, francés, inglés, italiano o portugués, deberán seguir las normas de la revista y ser enviados antes del 1 de junio de 2013 a la siguiente dirección: lectora@ub.edu

El coordinador del dossier es Rodrigo Andrés, investigador del Centre Dona i Literatura y profesor de Literatura de los Estados Unidos en la Universitat de Barcelona. Es autor de *Herman Melville: poder y amor entre hombres* (2007), coeditor de *Hombres soñados por escritoras de hoy: figuras masculinas en la literatura norteamericana* (2009) y editor de *Homoerotismos literarios* (2011).

Environmental Crisis and Human Costs

Benjamin Franklin American Studies Research Institute
CLYMA Series
University of Alcalá, Spain

Editors: Ufuk Ozdag, Hacettepe University, Turkey
François Gavillon, Université de Bretagne Occidentale, France

The link between environmental devastation and health disruption is finally on the public health agenda. Nuclear catastrophes, the use of pesticides, air pollution, toxic waste, synthetic chemicals, GMOs, are all connected to the escalating rates of deadly diseases. Widespread public awareness owes much to Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (2012 marks the 50th anniversary)—the book that launched the environmental movement with its deep documentation of pesticide damage to human health and to the natural environment. Writers/scientists following in Carson's footsteps, have currently made human health issues one central focus of mainstream environmentalism in the West. Sandra Steingraber (*Living Downstream: A Scientist's Personal Investigation of Cancer and the Environment*, 1997), Theo Colborn, Dianne Dumanoski, and John Peterson Myers (*Our Stolen Future: How We Are Threatening Our Fertility, Intelligence and*

Survival, 1997), and Devra Davis (*When Smoke Ran Like Water: Tales of Environmental Deception and the Battle against Pollution*, 2002) have furthered Carson's legacy into the new millennium. In these works, the intertwined ecologies of the human body and the earth body define the health of the ecosystems. Likewise, both non-fiction and fiction writers have explored the connection between the environment and human health issues. Among major works are Terry Tempest Williams's *Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place* (1991), Ana Castillo's *So Far from God* (1993), Helena Maria Viramontes's *Under the Feet of Jesus* (1995), and Ann Pancake's *Strange As This Weather Has Been* (2007).

We invite papers addressing the impact of environmental derangement on human health in literature, film studies or other cultural expressions in the United States. Possible focuses include:

- Environmental issues affecting human health;
- Denunciations of environmental racism and its disproportionate effects on minority and poor populations;
- Parallel effects of environmental, physical and mental health derangement;
- Intertwined ecologies of the human body and the earth body;
- Cultural diversity and biodiversity: health and wealth.

Manuscripts (5000-7000 words) should be sent to both ozdag@hacettepe.edu.tr and fgavillon@gmail.com by December 31, 2012. A brief abstract should be sent to both editors by September 5th. To receive a copy of the submission guidelines, please contact Ufuk or François.



HUELLAS DE ESTADOS UNIDOS:

Estudios, perspectivas y debates desde america latina

Huellas de los Estados Unidos. Estudios, Perspectivas y Debates es una revista electrónica semestral que busca ocupar un espacio académico poco transitado en la Argentina, que es el estudio de Estados Unidos de América desde una perspectiva crítica. En pleno siglo XXI y en los umbrales de una transformación política mundial, reclama nuestro interés una reflexión sobre los intentos de los Estados

Unidos por organizar un sistema mundial de manera estable. Nuestra Revista intenta brindar elementos suficientes para repasar su historia, colaborando así en una mayor comprensión de la actualidad. Su contenido abordará un amplio espectro de temas relacionados con la Historia de los Estados Unidos, las artes y la cultura, la economía, la sociedad, su política doméstica y política exterior.

Huellas de los Estados Unidos. Estudios, Perspectivas y Debates desde América Latina está abierta a los comentarios de los visitantes y dispuesta a publicar distintas voces sobre la interpretación de los temas que tratemos en nuestra revista. Los invitamos a visitar nuestro sitio web, conocer nuestra propuesta y acceder a nuestra más reciente edición:

<http://www.huellasdeeu.com.ar/index.html>

CONVOCATORIA DE ARTICULOS NÚMERO 4, MARZO 2013

Abrimos la convocatoria para el próximo número e invitamos al envío de artículos científicos sobre temáticas económicas, políticas, sociales y culturales sobre los Estados Unidos. Se incluirá un dossier relacionado con el tema "*Las elecciones en los Estados Unidos*". Fecha límite de recepción de artículos: 15 de enero de 2013.

Las normas de publicación deben consultarse accediendo al siguiente link:

<http://www.huellasdeeu.com.ar/normas/index.html>

PROYECTOS DE INVESTIGACIÓN

LA LITERATURA DEL OESTE DE LOS EE.UU. EN EL SIGLO XXI: ¿UN TERRITORIO SIN FRONTERAS?

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Este proyecto de investigación aborda la evolución de la literatura centrada en el Oeste de los EE.UU. durante el presente siglo, prestando atención a las características más significativas de la prosa y la poesía más recientes ambientadas en dicho territorio. Se prestará especial atención a las complejas relaciones entre la literatura y las transformaciones socio-políticas, económicas y culturales, analizando la representación literaria de fenómenos tales como el 11-S, la recesión económica, la globalización, la inmigración, el feminismo, la interculturalidad o las crisis medioambientales contemporáneas. En particular, se tratará de determinar la extensión e influencia reales de las imágenes literarias del Oeste que predominan en la literatura más reciente, incidiendo en la tensión entre aquellos autores que retratan un nuevo Oeste plural, cosmopolita, urbano y carente de buena parte de su mitología fronteriza y aquellos otros que, particularmente tras el 11-S, se refugian en las señas de identidad clásicas del imaginario tradicional del Oeste mítico. Dadas las características transnacionales de este territorio literario el proyecto también abordará la representación del Oeste más allá de las fronteras de los EE.UU., prestando atención a autores de otros países, que recientemente han elegido esta región como escenario literario. Finalmente, es nuestro propósito atender también a la dimensión interdisciplinar de la literatura del Oeste más reciente, examinando su conexión con otras disciplinas artísticas, por ejemplo, con el cine, dada la tradicional estrecha relación entre ambos géneros y las notables adaptaciones cinematográficas de calidad aparecidas en los últimos años, analizando los correspondientes trasvases culturales.

***EL TRAUMA Y SU SUPERACIÓN:
RETÓRICA Y POLÍTICA DEL SUFRIMIENTO
EN LA NARRATIVA CONTEMPORÁNEA EN LENGUA INGLESA***

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Este proyecto pretende abrir y establecer una línea de investigación interdisciplinar sobre las dimensiones retórica y política de la narrativa literaria con el doble propósito de destacar contemporánea como otras formas no traumáticas de sufrimiento colectivo e individual, así como su relevancia para sacar a la luz y denunciar conflictos y abusos que quedarían de otra manera ocultos y silenciados.

“Hombres de Ficción: hacia una historia de la masculinidad a través de la literatura y el cine de los Estados Unidos, siglos XX y XXI”

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Resumen del Proyecto: Dados los escasos estudios diacrónicos de la masculinidad en la historia literaria norteamericana, el proyecto pretende llenar este vacío explorando la cambiante trayectoria de la masculinidad a lo largo del siglo XX hasta la actualidad. Siguiendo la reflexión de dos proyectos anteriores (IM: 42/98 y 62/03), el objetivo del presente estudio es investigar la manera en que los factores sociales, políticos, económicos y culturales han contribuido a configurar diferentes tipos de masculinidades y explorarlas mediante el análisis de representaciones literarias y fílmicas. El proyecto pretende deconstruir representaciones de masculinidades tradicionales al tiempo que visibilizar imágenes alternativas que pueden contribuir a la creación de formas de ser hombre más igualitarias.

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GORE VIDAL

1925-2012



The American Historical Novel:
Gore Vidal

Agustín Safón Supervía

The historical novelist *par excellence*,
although perhaps limited by that term, is probably Gore Vidal.

Javier Coy

Coy's words constitute—no news in his case—a sharp entrance to the point this paper aims to put forward: Gore Vidal is, probably, *the* North American historical novelist. But also: the literary subgenre that Vidal masters is, undoubtedly, *the* controversial one, controversial, at least, as to limit the author attached to the term. No matter what study we approach in the field of the historical novel, the sequence of analysis we encounter will be repeated almost mathematically: distrust—open rejection in many—of literary critics and historians towards the subgenre; the lack of solid theory about the historical novel; the recognition of Lukács as the cornerstone of such theoretical effort and of Walter Scott as the undisputed father of historical narrative.

Condemned as it may be, there is one type of historical novel that cannot be rejected: the good one. That is to say, a novel that is correctly built from a literary point of view and that uses such correctness to

transmit a credible picture of the past. And *credible* here means not only respectful with the agreed-upon facts but also capable of dealing with a historical moment in a way that transcends mere folklore and shows its always multifaceted core. We do not need to go further down this line, especially if we refer to Coy's words again:

Literature, then, in a very real sense, would have to be the summing up of a people and its history, although obviously that admits shades, degrees and qualifications, because the environment, the various ones, at play upon the individual personality can be a family environment [...] or a personal environment [...] or a social one, or a regional or even a national context. This national context would be the specific object of the historical novel, which concerns itself with what we could call the collective circumstance which in fact subsumes in itself all the other kinds of circumstances. (216)

Despite the fact that, as Coy himself argues, all literature is in one respect or another historical, the subgenre of the historical novel requires no further defense if we agree that mediocrity in it is as usual as in any other literary form, as valuable accomplishments are.

The first historical novels that were seriously popular in the United States were those of the creator of the genre. Walter Scott's *Waverly* narratives conquered the North American—and international, for that matter—market short after their publication in 1814. Only seven years later, James Fenimore Cooper, the *American Scott*, as he hated to be called, entered the historical novel arena with *The Spy*. *The Pioneers*, *The Last of the Mohicans*, *The Pathfinder*, *The Deerslayer*, and *The Prairie*, all five novels published as *The Leather-Stocking Tales* in 1850, constitute the first pillar of the genre in the US.

A very brief catalogue of the top accomplishments of the American historical narrative should include Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, Melville's *Benito Cereno* and *Billy Bud*, Mark Twain's *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, Cather's *My Ántonia*, Wharton's *The Age of Innocence*, Allen Tate's *The Fathers* and Faulkner's *Go Down, Moses* and *Absalom, Absalom!*ⁱ This list is formed by what George Dekker calls the elite figures and works in the American historical romance tradition. As Dekker himself admits, the list of historical novelists should include names like those of Ellen Glasgow, George W. Cable, Esther Forbes, Ernest Gaines, John Pendleton Kennedy, William Gilmore Simms and others. However, no matter how correct their historical narrative may be, oblivion has overtaken most of it. And despite the fact that "nobody who has reflected seriously on the history of taste or the politics of canon formation can have much faith in the reliability of the survival test, I believe that it usually works fairly well at the extremes of literary worth and worthlessness" (23).

Dekker's somewhat contradictory words are useful in order to add some names to the list of forerunner historical novelists because John Dos Passos's *U.S.A.*, Margaret Mitchell's *Gone With The Wind* or John Barth's *The Sot-Weed Factor* are far from oblivion. As are of course, Gore Vidal's *Julian*, *Creation* and the monumental *American Biography*. After having published more than twenty novels, several mystery

stories, a good number of cinema and television scripts, theater plays and thousands of pages of literary and political essays, his American chronicle “may well be seen as Vidal’s main achievement by future historians of literature” (Parini 17).

After his first—and successful—incursion in the subgenre with *Julian* (1964), Vidal took a second step in that line, initiating a narrative effort that would keep him busy for more than twenty years. *Washington D.C.* (1967) is the first installment of what is known today as the *American Biography*.² The novel contains certain clues for a narration towards the past: Burr is mentioned as a dark forefather of the fictitious Sanford family and Charles Schuyler acknowledged as their *legal* origin. Given such a basis, Vidal started writing *Burr* with something like the *American Biography* in mind. By the time he gets on with *1876*, the saga is definitely clear. Vidal’s aim, “writing a comprehensive fictional history of the United States that includes and important revisionist understanding of the relationship between American history and its literature” (Pease 246), is at hand.

The whole is greater than the chaining of its parts. The aesthetic effectiveness of the six novels is uneven but that *whole* clearly reinforces the weaknesses of some of the *parts*. The main character—Caroline Sanford—in *Empire* and *Hollywood* widens the scope of two narrations that come as excessively dense at some moments. Vidal’s treatment of sensationalism in the press, of the demiurgic power of mass-media, and his uncompromising stand in the role of the intellectual in society give full value to the trilogy devoted to the twentieth century. The aim of introducing reasonable doubt into airbrushed versions of official history transforms the trilogy of the nineteenth century into a pleasurable tool for the study of the consolidation of the United States as a nation.

Everything in the *Vidalian manner*, of course: far from ultranationalist complexes and those prejudices that some approaches to political correctness produce. Such complexes and prejudices, present in the construction of any country on the planet, are precisely the pseudoscientific versions of the past needed to bond emotions and create majority wills. Vidal sails out with his *American Biography* to confront those versions as a true regenerationist because “being American is his problem. His passion for what America is or is not dominates his thoughts” (Calvino 33). The fact that the North-American intellectual establishment turned its back on him—and not on Norman Mailer, his generational alter ego—for decades cannot be understood exclusively because of the scandal that *The City and The Pillar* generated³ The relative rejection of the subgenre also seems insufficient as an explanation for the absence of Vidal’s chronicle in literature courses. Donald E. Pease, who shares with Vidal the theory that the American academic world is affected by a certain degree of acritical sclerosis, states that only the increasing influence of New Historicism among university teachers will place the *American Biography* in curriculum:

Unlike the literary critics who banished Gore Vidal, the New Historicists share his understanding of literature as an historical force. The difference between them involves the sites on which they would exert this force. Because Vidal’s work has never been a presence within the academy, his fictional histories are addressed to the larger public constructed out of the controversies

accompanying his books. But the New Historicists have conducted all their field work in the academy. Like their precursors in the counterculture, they have returned political categories—race, class, gender—to the study of literature, and thereby changed this field of academic study as well as the literary curriculum. But without widespread understanding of the historic significance of this change [...] the New Historicists remain a marginal political force. (276)

No matter how slow that change may be, the six novels in Vidal's chronicle are perfectly ready for an academic reconsideration that cannot elude *against the grain* nuances. Vidal's *Burr* presents a treason to democracy from the start. Narrating the life of the man that killed Hamilton in a duel is, in itself, a declaration of general principles. Alexander Hamilton, secretary of the treasury with George Washington, was the first great defender of the idea of a strong Union as opposed to the confederate model, sponsored among others by Jefferson, Madison and Burr himself. From an economic point of view, these two confronted political stands turn into industrialization backed by interventionism, and agrarian populism, respectively. The success of Hamilton's thesis was so overwhelming that not even Jefferson, after reaching the presidency, would be able to dismantle tariff protection and industrial intervention. The benefits that the United States were beginning to gain in those fields thanks to the Napoleonic wars were too big. That way, Hamilton entered history as the economic father of the nation while Burr became the dark adventurer that mowed down his life. Freudian echoes aside, Vidal reinstates Burr on the same basis as he considers his country a treasoned democracy, sold out to spurious interests: to confirm the existence of an alternative—defensible as much as defeated—to the triumphant "American Way of Life" as we know it. Narrating Burr's life is, in fact, an exercise of American history critical revision and constitutes one more step in the vindication of heterodoxy that has kept Vidal busy from the very beginning of his career.

A central aim, then, of the Vidalian chronicle is the reinterpretation of the political reality of a nation that was born as a romantic democracy and that soon evolved towards imperial positions. Facing Lincoln was inevitable. Lincoln the man, cautiously; Lincoln as a tendency, openly:

The omniscient narrator provides us with the thoughts of other characters about Lincoln but never with Lincoln's own thoughts, only his words and other's impressions of his words. Indeed, although technically accurate, the term "omniscient" may be misleading here. Lincoln's narrator provides us access to the perspectives and motives of several secondary characters, but those of Lincoln remain enigmatic. (Baker and Gibson 87)

Vidal dares an attack on the idol in order to restore his human stature. Such rethinking causes discomfort. According to popular belief, Lincoln is the "Honest Abe" that provided freedom to black people. The great man of humble origin that put an end to slavery. But not even the most conservative of historians would stop his or her analysis of the president that took the United States to the Civil War there. Antislavery was not the ultimate reason for the war and it was certainly not—as the president himself acknowledged—Lincoln's main political concern. Preventing the break-up of the Union was his obsession, *even if* he had to ban slavery to do so. The clash of two economic and political models, rooted in the first steps of the

nation, as we read in *Burr*, explains the Civil War. But historiography agrees on this approach. Vidal's daring consists in reminding us that Lincoln had no objection in denying the Constitution—suspension of *habeas corpus*—with the purpose of consolidating his unionist stand. The precedent he established leads directly to present day presidentialism in the United States. So,

The Lincoln of Vidal's novel is [...] a complex and sometimes devious politician driven by a vision that will eventually forge the nation anew [...] emerges as a grander, subtler, more mysterious personage than the sentimentalized icon of legend. Lincoln is the novel's protagonist in the deepest sense of the word, not only its chief character but also a driving force in the terrible national agon that was the Civil War. (Baker and Gibson 83-84)

The third installment of the *American Biography* constitutes a turning point in more than one sense. For one thing, literature and history come to a balance that the two first novels lose in favour of non-fictional events. In *Burr* and *Lincoln* the plot is tributary of historical stars as well as having to accept the role of mere introducer of the fictional saga that grows precisely from 1876 on. Thus, the young and blurred Charly Schuyler that took notes in front of the Founding Fathers evolves to protagonist. In this third novel, presidents Tilden or Hayes serve the same Vidalian purpose as Lincoln or Van Buren—to go further down the demythologizing line in parallel with growing analytical complexity—but Schuyler is introduced as a milestone of the other great aim in Vidal's sextet: showing the individual as interacting with his or her environment. And, last but not least, the aim of establishing symmetries with the present is also there:

It is nearly axiomatic that good historical novels provide a kind of resonance with contemporary affairs, and *1876* is no exception (indeed, it was published in America's bicentennial year of 1976). Vidal clearly aligns his echoes, so that Samuel J. Tilden reminds one of the idealistic yet ineffective George McGovern, while Rutherford B. Hayes recalls the stumbling and bumbling Gerald Ford. Mark Twain (in his white suit) comes off as a Tom Wolfe figure, a bright-winged insect buzzing in society's ear. (Parini 22-23)

It is in this third novel that the final treason on democracy—structural corruption—ends up comfortably installed. The anomalies of the Tilden-Hayes election give way to the era historically known as that of the "Robber Barons."⁴ Any hope of regeneration seems an illusion.

In Vidal's search for turning points that bring coherence to his historical revision, making a stop at the turn of the century was a must. The presidencies of McKinley—1897/1901—and Theodore Roosevelt—1901/1909—mean the inclusion of the United States in the race to split up the planet along with the Europeans and Japan. *Empire* narrates the inevitable assault on world power but it also takes a close look at the consolidation of the press as opinion maker. The fourth novel of the Vidalian chain swings between these two facts and entwines his fictional saga with the world of the yellow press, introducing Caroline Sanford—Charles Schuyler's granddaughter—as one of his models of individual placement in society. And those two facts—press and colonialism—will be exemplified in *Empire* by means of two historical figures confronted in this narration:

That Vidal emphasizes the significance of Roosevelt and Hearst in this fiction is no mistake. They were outsize personalities whose private agendas exerted undue influence on American History. Vidal's artistic apprehension of the two—and his own thematic purpose—become clear when we appreciate the restraint of his brush. He takes what he wants from the record, but stops short of caricature. The warts may be in high relief, but the surrounding flesh is accorded credible weight. From a pair of well-documented, if lamentable, historical characters Vidal creates a couple of archetypes to personify his real ogres: the media (Hearst) and twentieth-century colonialism. (Baker 114)

The use that Vidal makes of these two immense historical characters is certainly archetypal. The fact that both are “well documented, if lamentable” figures, allows the author of the *American Biography* their inclusion in a fictionalizing process that turns them into an ultimate explanation of ulterior realities. The road towards imperialism is easily traceable in the Vidalian trilogy that narrates the nineteenth century but it is in *Empire*, with the appearance of certain media, more inclined to opinion than to information, that everything begins to square. The vigorous stammering of a power that will define, to a great extent, the twentieth century is treated here as unabashedly as it should be. And the birth of yellow journalism is furthermore fused in this novel with the introduction of the great female character of the *Biography*, Caroline Sanford, a character that will grow during the following installment, taking part in another transcendental birth for the making of the collective conscience of the century: cinema.

The fifth novel in Vidal's chronicle seems conditioned by two items that could, apparently, diminish it. For one thing, it is the last one written in order to close the circle of the author's historical and literary revision. And on the other hand, *Hollywood* is *Empire*'s sequel as the direct follower of its narration: Caroline continues to be its central character and Hearst, among others, keeps on providing a solid secondary reinforcement. These two apparent hindrances, however, are no drawback at all. The historical moment chosen by Vidal in order to close the sextet is perfectly suitable for his demythologizing-cathartic purpose. If Woodrow Wilson's presidency—1913/1921—means a starting point for the arms race, scarcely balanced by meager liberal reforms, that of Warren Harding—1921/1923—means speculative wildness.

The use of cinema as the guiding theme of a historical novel corpus that intends to leave us at the door of the most immediate yesterday needs little justification. Moreover, Vidal's direct knowledge of this world provides fresh narrative effectiveness. Anyhow,

Hollywood, the factory of illusion, is Vidal's metaphor for the political dream machine that manufactures its own truth for mass consumption. The gap between the governed and their elected rulers is wide, he tells us, and the buffer between them is a blurred rendition of reality more palatable to the electorate than the reality itself. The thesis is self-evident and requires little explication. (Dick 125)

This approach is certainly widespread in the Western world, where reality on the screen is beginning to be confused with reality of the senses—including common sense—and that is exactly what Vidal understood almost forty years ago when he wrote *Washington D.C.*⁵

The novel that put Vidal to work on his *American Biography* has been defined more as a political fiction than as a historical novel *sensu strictu*. None of the main characters in it belongs to a figure taken out of historical reality. Nevertheless, history is always present, if only because fictional characters belong to ruling classes—political, journalistic, financial. But also because of the skill with which Vidal introduces several problems of historical relevance: the impossibility of immaculate political action; treason to individual principles in favor of the common good; the birth of the amoral, media-conditioned, politician; the final consolidation of mass media as reality creators.

Washington D.C. also deals with a subject that is particularly dear to Vidal: the always difficult balance between status acceptance and rejection that every individual has to undertake in order to find his or her place in society. *Empire* and *Hollywood* show one of his proposals of a solution to that tension; *Washington D.C.* posits another: the clearly Vidalian model, Peter Sanford. Peter's moral and intellectual qualities seduce the reader and allow a calm, if rather distant, look at the muddy, unstable balance of American politics. He belongs to that minority social and political trend that objects to capitalism and its all too frequent fiascos, and that, far from dismay at the absence of a global alternative, keeps on acting ethically.

The nature of power and the ethical stand before it—before life, in fact—are the themes of the novel, even though

a novel about political machinations is as predictable as a play about the theatre; each confirms what we already know. One expects to find the mighty toppling through liquor and sex, careers ending abruptly with the disclosure of some ancient secret, the young Turks battling the old guard, the devious protégé eclipsing, if not annihilating, his unsuspecting patron—in short, the customary types who weave bastardy or bitchery depending upon the dominance of testosterone or estrogens. The world of *Washington D. C.* is so archetypal with its wise old men and young princes that it seems to have been carved out of the collective unconscious. (Dick 125)

It is Vidal's opinion that his novel's great merit consists in calling our attention to his senator, James Burden Day, and “the most interesting problem” that he has ever taken to a novel. The senator's treason—he accepts a bribe in order to finance his run for the White House and then commits his presidential days to the moral regeneration of the job—is really on himself and for the sake of a greater, nobler good. The moral dilemma has, certainly, no solution. The fact that the “devious protégé,” as Bernard F. Dick puts it, uses the story to annihilate his patron constitutes the announcement of the death of ethics in politics, much more than a narrative punishment for a self-denied conscience.

What is, then, the motif of Vidal's *American Biography*? For one thing, aesthetic pleasure, of course—one of the best reasons for a novelist's endeavor. But then, also the need to enrich History with literary nuances that fill the gaps of *everydayness* that science leaves. And, finally, demythologizing of the *res publica*, in order to take away the veils that blur citizen's eyes to bad administration. We, the people of computerized-postmodern-democracies, might do well to ask ourselves if Vidal's words—in senator Day's mouth, “we now live under a presidential dictatorship, with periodic referendums which allow us to change the dictator but not the dictatorship”—are just a strained and cunning observation or mere political theory. More to the point, the justification that conservative historians have found for the deviation from the original democratic principles involves the concept of American exceptionalism. According to it, the United States forms a unique model in History, alien to the rest of the planet that allows exceptional actions, never *treasons* to original principle whatsoever. Vidal re-interprets this doctrine and presents it as the mask that hides from a good number of American eyes—and only from them, of course—the imperialist character of their system. Vidal's unmasking of dynastic, journalistic, industrial and financial oligarchs returns to American history the representation of a class conflict that is frequently ignored by the Academe.

But the *American Biography* has yet another not-quite-hidden theme: symbolizing the individual-collectivity interaction. The history of human thought has witnessed thorough debates between those ethical stands that give priority to the individual and those that make the State, the common good, prevail. With a social and psychological approach, rather than a strictly philosophical one, the two great fictional characters in Vidal's sextet—Caroline Sanford and her nephew Peter—constitute two radically different proposals of the novelist for the complex and unavoidable linking between an individual human being and his or her social environment, his or her *polis*.

As with any other great character in the history of literature, summarizing Caroline and Peter down to their archetypal essence is as easy as it is risky. Caroline's obsession with power is no weaker than that of Captain Ahab for his mythical whale. Reaching their morbid dream destroys them both: Ahab dead on his chimera; Caroline empty after riding hers. They have both mis-focused their target. But Vidal, less moralizing than Melville, gives regeneration a chance and grants Caroline an apprenticeship that redeems her. The Vidalian heroine will dismount her obsessive individualism in order to find out—bewildered as much as relieved—that *the other* (individual and social) exists as an unavoidable complement of *the self*.

Peter's apprenticeship, however, runs in parallel with his psycho-biological maturing. Peter Sanford feels, even in his adolescence, that his strength of mind is a means of getting ahead in the fallacious world of the ruling class reserved to him as a birthright. His is the intimate, minority and solid world of those that find a personal balance in solidarity, in friendship, in love. Quixotic as they are, such values will shape a reasonable image in his mirror. The only morally acceptable victory: triumph of the conscience. Peter charges against a system that he knows he can't destroy. His thrust will merely scratch the polished surface of the arbitrary setup that surrounds him/us, but such is the intellectual's pledge: to stain with words the tidy bunker of power.

In short, Vidal's *American Biography* constitutes a survival manual for anticapitalists with no alternative. Reading this novel, then, leads us to acknowledge the radical dignity of mankind above cruelty and insolidarity. It is a homage to those who still believe in the incorruptible capacity for regeneration of human beings. After all, says Vidal, "change is the nature of life, and its hope" (374). Let us, at least, keep on hoping.

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Notes

¹ A good number of Faulknerians would probably reject the inclusion of these novels in a list of historical narratives arguing that they do not follow Walter Scott's trend *sensu strictu*. And they would be right, of course. Nevertheless, Faulkner's narratives in general and the two cited in particular, have a multifaceted relation to history, as the congress held at Universidad de Salamanca back in 1986, hosted by Javier Coy, thoroughly demonstrated. Gore Vidal, one of the greatest historical novelists, also drifts away from Scott in more than one sense and deserves a recognition—yet once again—as master of the subgenre.

² The sequence of publishing differs from that of the historical reading: *Washington D.C.* (1967), *Burr* (1973), *1876* (1976), *Lincoln* (1984), *Empire* (1988), *Hollywood* (1990). The historical sequence—origins to Cold War—would be *Burr-Lincoln-1876-Empire-Hollywood-Washington D.C.*

³ Vidal's second novel, published in 1948, and the first in North American literature to present a good, all-American, normal boy as a homosexual.

⁴ The Democrat Tilden had defeated the Republican Hayes by 184 electoral votes to 166. The Republicans cast a doubt on the nineteen votes in dispute. "A commission was established by the so-called Compromise of 1877 to adjudicate the matter of disputed election returns in several southern states. The Republican majority on that commission, in return for certain concessions, was awarded the electoral votes of the states in question, exactly the number of votes needed in the Electoral College to swing the election to Hayes. What the Republicans effectively conceded to Southern Democrats was the end of Lincoln's program of Reconstruction; by so doing, they may

unwittingly have condemned the country to the climate of racial inequality and hostility that permeates American society today” (Baker and Gibson 104).

⁵ A rewriting of this novel appeared in 2000, titled *The Golden Age*.

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