

SHIFTING
DYNAMICS
OF
AMERICAN
STUDIES

A WORKSHOP FOR
EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS
OCT 12-13, 2018

UNIVERSITY OF SALZBURG
UNIPARK NONNTAL
ROOM 4.201

WORKSHOP PROGRAM

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FRIDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2018

09:00 - 10:00	Registration		
10:00 - 10:30	Opening Remarks		
10:30 - 12:00	Keynote Lecture		
	<p>Prof. Dr. Dennis Chester California State University, East Bay</p>	<p>Ex-Pats and Aliens: Afrofuturism and Black Subjectivity</p>	<p>Chairs: Elisabeth Krieger Christoph Straub</p>
12:00 - 13:00	Lunch		
13:00 - 15:00	Panel I: Representing Race and Gender		
	<p>Gergely Vörös University of Bratislava</p>	<p>Misrepresentation, Identity, and Authorship in Percival Everett's <i>Erasure</i></p>	<p>Chair: Roberta Hofer</p>
	<p>Juliann Knaus University of Graz</p>	<p>Mixed Race and Boundaryless: Mixed- Race Representation in Natasha Trethewey's <i>Thrall</i></p>	
	<p>Angelika Schneider University of Klagenfurt</p>	<p>Female Stereotypes, (Secret) Sexual Identity(ies), and Marginalized Heroines: Representation and Subversion of Gender in DC Comics' Publications</p>	
15:00 - 15:30	Coffee		
15:30 - 16:50	Panel II: Transgressive Sexualities		
	<p>Si Whybrew University of Graz</p>	<p>Imaging Trans Worlds: Be/Longing and Kinship in Trans Authored Science Fiction</p>	<p>Chair: Christian Stenico</p>
	<p>Ewa Ścibior University of Warsaw</p>	<p>Confusing Identities: Transgender and Crossdressing Characters in American Literature of the 1960s and 1970s</p>	
18:00 - 20:00	Conference Dinner (Restaurant "Green Garden" Nonntaler Hauptstraße 16 5020 Salzburg)		

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2018

08:00 – 09:00	Coffee / Opening		
09:00 – 11:00	Panel III: Liminal Identities		
	<p>Bettina Huber University of Passau</p> <p>Manuela Neuwirth University of Graz</p> <p>Marilyn Sook Yuen Lim University of Graz</p>	<p>Identity (Re)Constructions in Life Narratives of US Veterans Suffering from PTSD (WT)</p> <p>Postmodern and Posthuman Predicaments? (Multi)Liminality as Monstrosity in <i>The X-Files</i></p> <p>“All You Write About / Is Being Gay or Chinese”: Liminality in Chen Chen and Ocean Vuong’s Poems</p>	<p>Chair: Helena Oberzaucher</p>
11:00 – 11:30	Coffee		
11:30 – 13:30	Panel II: (Constructing) Dynamic Spaces		
	<p>Maryam Kashefolhagh University of Marburg</p> <p>Sigrid Thomsen University of Vienna</p> <p>Nari Shelekpayev University of Montréal</p>	<p>Construction, (Re)Creation and Transformation of Identity through Immigration</p> <p>Small-Scale Mobilities: Moving Apartments in Contemporary US TV and Film</p> <p>The Royal Visits to Ottawa and the Construction of Canadian National Identity (1860-1839)</p>	<p>Chair: Silke Jandl</p>
14:00 – ~ 17:00	Optional: Farewell Lunch (tba) / Cultural Activity in Salzburg		

**EX-PATS AND ALIENS:
AFROFUTURISM AND BLACK SUBJECTIVITY****Prof. Dr. Dennis Chester**

California State University, East Bay
Friday, October 12, 2018 | 10:30 - 12:00

In his keynote address, tentatively titled “Ex-Pats and Aliens: Afrofuturism and Black Subjectivity,” Dr. Chester will trace the development of Afrofuturism as a genre, including some early proto-examples in African American literature from the turn of the twentieth century, then looking at examples of the genre in music, film, and literature from the 1960s through to the present. In doing so, he will demonstrate ways that artists working contemporarily in the genre use it to articulate new perspectives on Black identity that cross national boundaries and envision new spaces of empowerment.

Dennis Chester is a professor at California State University, East Bay in the San Francisco Bay Area where he teaches courses on African American literature and culture. Dr. Chester has published articles and given presentations on figures from the Harlem Renaissance, African American detective fiction, contemporary African American popular culture, and other topics. His current studies are focused on issues of diaspora as they appear in Black speculative fiction.



PANEL I: REPRESENTING RACE & GENDER

Chair: Roberta Hofer

University of Innsbruck

Friday, October 12, 2018 | 13:00 - 15:00

MISREPRESENTATION, IDENTITY, AND AUTHORSHIP IN PERCIVAL EVERETT'S *ERASURE*

Gergely Vörös

University of Bratislava

The microcosm of Percival Everett's novel, *Erasure* – just as our own world – is interwoven with a set of normative expectations that not only circumscribe the self-identity of its main character, Thelonious Monk Ellison, but have a determining effect on him as an author as well. Ellison does not “believe in race” yet, being racially marked, he is faced with a series of expectations to which he cannot live up to. Hence, as he confesses: “[p]eople [...] tell me I am not *black* enough”. Racial assumptions, however, haunt him as a novelist as well. As he refuses to produce easily marketable “gritty real stories of black life” that would (mis-)represent the African-American experience, his work remains ignored or criticised for being inauthentic. Under the pseudonym of Stagg R. Leigh, Ellison publishes a novella, *My Pafology*, which, although intended to be a parody, by the public is taken as an authentic insight into *black experience*, and it becomes an enormous success. Following the novella's success, from the simple pseudonym of Stagg R. Leigh a complete personality develops – one that is in line with the expectations raised towards an African-American writer. And Ellison is left with a choice: he either embraces the ideological assumptions imposed on him as Stagg R. Leigh or, by rejecting them, he remains a marginal novelist as Thelonious Ellison. As it follows, the aim of this presentation is to cast light on how the novel, by suggesting that personal and authorial identity are constructed discursively, questions the idea of authorship in its essence.

MIXED RACE AND BOUNDARYLESS: MIXED-RACE REPRESENTATION IN NATASHA TRETHERWEY'S *THRALL*

Juliann Knaus

University of Graz

The representation of race in literary and artistic works has been widely debated in the field of American Studies. However, these larger debates on race and representation have not always adequately addressed the portrayal of mixed race peoples in art and poetry. As the field of mixed race studies continues to grow, my research project attempts to fill this gap by concentrating on the representation of mixed race children with white fathers paying special attention to how aspects of knowledge and colonialism/imperialism affect the portrayal of these father-child relationships.

In my project, I will be more specifically analyzing poems from Natasha Trethewey's *Thrall* (2012), in order to look more closely at her interpretation of the positioning of mixed race peoples in America, and in colonial representations, particularly Mexican Casta paintings. The aim of my paper is to argue that Trethewey uses ekphrasis and etymology in order to emphasize the relationship between language/knowledge and colonialism/'othering'. Trethewey intertwines mixed race representation and experiences that seem disparate - her poems cross geographical, temporal, and spatial boundaries, just as mixed race peoples' positioning in society often transcends such boundaries. Therefore, this project, by closely examining the representation of mixed race peoples and miscegenation in art and poetry, sheds a new light on how meaning can be developed between races and cultures. Further emphasizing how colonialism, knowledge, and etymology can be connected to these representations, thus contextualizing difference across time and space.

FEMALE STEREOTYPES, (SECRET) SEXUAL IDENTITY(IES), AND MARGINALIZED HEROINES: REPRESENTATION AND SUBVERSION OF GENDER IN DC COMICS' PUBLICATIONS

Angelika Schneider
University of Klagenfurt

This thesis aims to highlight the depiction of gender in DC Comics' Publications. This paper attempts to find explanations for two key questions: first, in which way are gender roles depicted and consistently reinforced in DC Comics from the Golden Age period to the Modern Age of comic books and to what extent do these representations perpetuate assumptions about women based on stereotypes.

The objective of this paper is to establish a theoretical framework which lays the foundation for a better understanding of the depiction of femininity/masculinity in DC Comics and its influence on general perceptions of gender in the context of four main issues: stereotypical portrayals, sexual identity(ies), subversion of gender norms, and underrepresentation by gender.

Therefore, the current paper is divided into four main sections: firstly, I will start with a discussion on sexualized portrayals of femininity and masculinity in DC Comics in correlation to the notion of female power/dominance/resistance as a threat to heteronormativity. Secondly, a number of issues such as a general misrepresentation of (homo)sexual identities of comic characters alongside heteronormative constructions of male superheroes will be pointed out. Thirdly, Wonder Woman's origin story will be discussed in terms of gender norms and maternal performativity. Finally, a quantitative examination of female and male characters in DC comic books will contribute to a better understanding regarding to what extent one of the two biggest American comic book publishers has shaped and preserved stereotypes and assumptions based on gender depictions in their publications.

PANEL II: TRANSGRESSIVE SEXUALITIES

Chair: Christian Stenico

University of Innsbruck

Friday, October 12, 2018 | 15:00 - 17:00

IMAGING TRANS WORLDS: BE/LONGING AND KINSHIP IN TRANS AUTHORED SCIENCE FICTION

Si Whybrew

University of Graz

Since the 1970s, science fiction (sf) stories have invoked the possibility of trans identification to interrogate gender norms. However, until recently the genre's futuristic orientation and fixation on technological advancement have overshadowed questions of identity and affective experience that are central to the lived reality of trans individuals. Thus, these stories were largely indicative of cisgender musings about what might happen if it were possible to live in a gender other than the one an individual was assigned to at birth. As a result, they negated and erased the continued historical existence of trans people and offered little to no grounds of identification for trans readers. The recent publication of six anthologies of sf short stories by trans authors provides a significant challenge to this legacy. In this paper, I will explore how the authors of these stories refocus the genre towards the affective and experiential dimension of trans life. In doing this, I will consider the ways in which these narratives might be able to function as identificatory and affective communal resources (i.e. trans worlds) for trans readers. To do this, I will juxtapose three short stories from the two anthologies published last year. Namely, Bogi Takács' *Transcendent 2: The Year's Best Transgender Speculative Fiction* and Cat Fitzpatrick's *Meanwhile, Elsewhere: Science Fiction and Fantasy from Transgender Writers*.

CONFUSING IDENTITIES: TRANSGENDER AND CROSSDRESSING CHARACTERS IN AMERICAN LITERATURE OF THE 1960S AND 1970S

Ewa Ścibior

University of Warsaw

In my PhD project I analyze the changing representations of drag queen characters in American literature, starting with the period shortly before the Stonewall riots up to the present day. While researching the earliest decades, I noticed pervasive irregularities in the way non-binary characters are addressed in the analyzed novels. The terms "drag queen," "transvestite," and "transsexual" seem to be used either interchangeably or not at all. It is my goal to explain this confusion by focusing on the three main ways in which gender nonconformity was explained at that time: as an overt manifestation of one's homosexuality, as necessarily transsexual, and as a third gender. Those explanations were

derived from the medical and sociological studies of transgendered and crossdressing individuals, which were becoming increasingly more popular after Stonewall.

The first part of my presentation will consist of a brief overview of the beginnings of scientific interest in non-normative sexualities based on the work of Richard von Kraft-Ebing, Otto Weiningen, Magnus Hirschfeld, Edward Carpenter, and Alfred Kinsey. I will follow with an analysis of studies published in the 1960s and 1970s: Harry Benjamin's *The Transsexual Phenomenon* (1966), Esther Newton's *Mother Camp* (1972), and a selection of articles published in medical journals. Finally, I will draw links between those theories and the strategies of representation of non-binary characters in four novels from the period: John Rechy's *City of Night* (1963), Gore Vidal's *Myra Breckinridge* (1968), Edward Swift's *Splendor* (1978), and Armistead Maupin's *Tales of the City* (1978).

**PANEL III:
LIMINAL IDENTITIES**

Chair: Helena Oberzaucher

University of Vienna

Saturday, October 13, 2018 | 09:00 - 11:00

**IDENTITY (RE)CONSTRUCTIONS
IN LIFE NARRATIVES OF US VETERANS SUFFERING FROM PTSD (WT)**

Bettina Huber

University of Passau

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a mental disorder most frequently associated with, but not limited to, war veterans. According to the US Department of Veterans Affairs, "10% to 18% of OEF/OIF [Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom] troops are likely to have PTSD after they return." In the broader context of trauma studies, US veterans who served during the War on Terror are unique in as far as they frequently must be seen as perpetrators and not necessarily only as victims suffering from traumas. This mixed status as both victim and perpetrator in a society entrenched in patriarchal and hierarchical ideals frequently leads to questions regarding the identity construction(s) of the individual soldier especially after they leave the military service.

In my PhD project I will analyze life narratives written by US veterans who served during the War on Terror and suffer from PTSD using theories from the fields of life narrative studies, trauma studies, affect studies, and gender studies. I will emphasize how these veterans employ their life narratives in attempts to negotiate their double-statuses as perpetrators and victims as well as soldiers and civilians. At the same time I will look at the presentation of the US military and the US government in these texts and how these institutions are used to define the soldiers' focus on individuality and identity (re)construction. This research aims to broaden the field of trauma studies and engage in the (moral) discussions connected to perpetrator traumas.

**POSTMODERN AND POSTHUMAN PREDICAMENTS?
(MULTI)LIMINALITY AS MONSTROSITY IN *THE X-FILES***

Manuela Neuwirth

University of Graz

In his *Picturing Extraterrestrials: Alien Images in Modern Mass Culture*, John F. Moffitt argues that "the reigning apocryphal celebrity of the [...] postmodernist age [...] is the extraterrestrial" (108), thus pinpointing the paradoxical status of the alien as a hidden icon. *The X-Files*, the TV phenomenon of the 1990s recently revived, likewise presents the figure of the alien as both seen and unseen. While most science-fiction/horror opts either for a full display of the monster in ghastly detail or else for hiding it from the spectators' view, *The X-Files*, interestingly, does both: While (shapeshifting) aliens

in humanoid form are frequently shown, ostensibly non-human extraterrestrial creatures are – barring spoofs and episodes set outside the usual narrative world – unseen, i.e. only shown as shadowy figures or in brief glimpses.

Not only in its visual representation does the extraterrestrial thus become a liminal figure and adopt a central role in a post/modernist borderland in *The X-Files*: the human-alien hybrids' shapeshifting abilities both challenge gender binaries while also recalling classic monsters of the modern era, such as vampires. They thus effectively turn the alien into a multiliminal character.

Against the backdrop of the recent 'posthuman turn' that has blurred distinctions between the human and its others, I will use the multiliminal extraterrestrial to examine the relation between the human and non-human in our posthuman era. In line with Rosi Braidotti's critical posthumanism, the televisual representation of extraterrestrials will serve to show that the posthuman era exacerbates rather than alleviates structural injustices.

**“ALL YOU WRITE ABOUT / IS BEING GAY OR CHINESE”:
LIMINALITY IN CHEN CHEN AND OCEAN VUONG’S POEMS**

Marilyn Sook Yuen Lim
University of Graz

The aim of this paper is to investigate how conceptions of space in the poems of two contemporary Asian American poets are negotiated. The analysis will include poems from Chen Chen's poetry collection, *When I Grow Up I Want to be a List of Further Possibilities*, as it was nominated in *Goodreads* 2017 Best Poetry collection, and Ocean Vuong's poetry collection, *Night Sky with Exit Wounds*, as it was a recipient of the T. S. Eliot Prize, also in 2017.

I will examine how spaces are negotiated using the notions of liminality to convey specific meanings, interpretations, and dynamics on two levels: the first involves the geographical references in the poems that function as spaces of comparisons, conflicts, and negotiations. The second is the spatial location of the poems; where the narrative of the poem is based on. The negotiations between two spaces, one of the home country and the country of origin, between the East and the West, are always present. These are negotiated through the notions of liminality as poetical strategies in the poems. The notions of space are also addressed in terms of the visual forms of the poems and in terms of the in-betweenness of the geographical and mental spaces of being within the diasporic nuances of Asian American experiences. I argue that these spatial in-betweenness between two geographical references and locations show not only liminal occurrences, but also the heterogeneity of Asian American experiences.

PANEL VI: (CONSTRUCTING) DYNAMIC SPACES

Chair: Silke Jandl

University of Graz

Saturday, October 13, 2018 | 11:30 – 13:30

CONSTRUCTION, (RE)CREATION AND TRANSFORMATION OF IDENTITY THROUGH IMMIGRATION

Maryam Kashfolhagh

University of Marburg

The concept of identity and identity transformation is a prominent and highly relevant topic in the context of (im)migration. As a buzzword once before in the 1980s and 1990s emerging with the increasing rise and prominence with American ethnic voices, among other areas of literature, identity can by no means at all be discarded as an old hat in literary and cultural studies in view of the recent political upheavals in the world as well as the current refugee crisis in particular.

The immigration process from Iran to the US from the 1970s onwards has witnessed two waves of “aliens” and “native-aliens” who respectively developed feelings of nostalgia and hope, while both had a constant longing of a one-day return to homeland. The present study contributes to the existing literature review by recognizing a third group – known as the third generation of immigrants: the “borderless immigrants” who may not be necessarily aware of their shaky identity but are bold enough to “shift the dynamics” of diasporic identity by going beyond the geographical borders in search for a sense of belonging.

As a human phenomenon, (im)migration in whichever form will always be shaped by questions of identity not only in the national and binational sense but also, and perhaps more in the current world, towards transnational approaches of identity. The inevitable outcomes of alienation, loss, and homesickness may be reduced to a great extent through rethinking and reestablishing the socio-cultural boundaries we have always assumed as parts of our inborn identity.

SMALL-SCALE MOBILITIES: MOVING APARTMENTS IN CONTEMPORARY US TV AND FILM

Sigrid Thomsen

University of Vienna

Recently, Mobilities Studies has gained traction within American Studies, as more scholars look at the ways social, cultural, economic and linguistic mobility intersect, and how these intersecting processes are depicted and mirrored in literature and film. But mobility – a word which is here taken to point to the movements of people through space, the sociopolitical, financial, and personal reasons for those

movements, and the ways their movement changes their sense of place and sense of self – gestures not just towards large-scale movements (for example a “refugee crisis”) but extends to the small-scale mobility of moving apartments: Even if it’s just from one Brooklyn apartment to another. This kind of mobility has been particularly present in American television (and film) in recent years: While Carrie Bradshaw lived in the same beautiful Upper East Side apartment throughout the run of *Sex and the City*, the characters in *Girls* steadily move from one apartment to the next, sometimes to be closer to lovers or friends, but often out of financial necessity; the same is true in films such as *Frances Ha*. Through looking at the mobility of moving apartments, it becomes possible to engage with the usefulness of Mobility Studies for American Studies while linking the characters’ (in)voluntary movement through space to the highly individual relationships they nonetheless build to their apartments, their “corner of the world” (Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*).

**THE ROYAL VISITS TO OTTAWA AND
THE CONSTRUCTION OF CANADIAN NATIONAL IDENTITY (1860-1939)**

Nari Shelekpayev

University of Montréal

Along with a growing intention of federal politicians to transform the urban space of Ottawa into a more pronounced marker of the Canadian national identity, British royal visits played a key role in the symbolic construction of Ottawa as capital city since 1860 until the mid-20th century. These visits are scrutinized in this communication to explore to what extent Ottawa as symbolic place was presumably fabricated with the help of the legitimation, stemming from British princes and monarchs. In particular, while the 1860 royal visit aimed at strengthening the autonomy of Canada in political affairs, the 1901 royal visit of Duke and Duchess of Kent and Cornwall aimed at transforming Ottawa into the epicenter of the political and cultural ties between Canada and the British Empire. A third royal visit, that of 1939 also had a highly loaded meaning. When King George VI arrived to Canada in 1939, the Dominion had already achieved the status of an autonomous state of the British Commonwealth of Nations. Prime-Minister Mackenzie King thus used the visit in every way he could to underscore the changed status of Canada. In particular, the tour included the inauguration of both the Confederation Square, and the newly designed – yet unbuilt – Supreme Court which replaced the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council of London as last instance court of appeal for Canada. The 1939 royal visit thus legitimized the new attributes of Canadian nationhood which were expressed via the urban landscape of Ottawa. These facts make one assume that the construction of Ottawa, as capital city, was not based on a symbolic break with the colonial past, as it happened for many countries in the world including some British colonies. Quite on the contrary, the involvement of the British royal family into the inaugurations of Ottawa demonstrates that Ottawa became a bastion of Canadian nationalism through a conscious relying on that past and deliberately exploiting its symbolic values.

ABOUT THE SPEAKERS

- ▶ **Bettina Huber** finished her MA in American Studies at the University of Regensburg in 2017 and is currently teaching American Studies at the University of Passau. Her PhD project is focused on the negotiation(s) of identities and the challenges of perpetrator traumas in life narratives of US soldiers suffering from PTSD. Her research interests include gender studies, trauma studies, visual culture studies, popular culture studies, life narratives, and the US military.
- ▶ **Maryam Kashfolhagh** is currently a PhD candidate at the Department of English and American Studies, North American Literary and Cultural Studies at Philipps University of Marburg, Germany. She is interested in theories of identity and their dynamic transformation through various media including language, culture, geography, and politics. In her PhD research project, she studies the process of identity (re)construction through the significant trends of immigration in her homeland Iran in literary works – mostly memoirs and autobiographies – written by female Iranian American authors of the diaspora.
- ▶ **Juliann Knaus** is currently a master's student at the University of Graz. Her research interests are rooted in the fields of African American Studies and Mixed Race Studies. More specifically, her work examines intersectionality and the representation of mixed race peoples in literature, particularly poetry, from the 1800s until today, with specific focus on the antebellum period, the Harlem Renaissance, and today (1990s to present). She is currently writing her master's thesis, which will look at Natasha Trethewey's *Thrall* and the importance of etymology and colonialism with regard to the representation of mixed race people in art and poetry.
- ▶ **Marilyn Sook Yuen Lim** is a Malaysian student currently pursuing her MA in English and American Studies at the University of Graz. After completing her undergraduate studies in Music from Middlesex University, London, her interest in literature has encouraged her to further her studies in both literature and cultural studies. She is currently in her final year of the MA program. She is also the winner of the Hostfilm Best Paper Award awarded by ERASMUS + project Hostfilm at the recent student conference held at the University of Graz in May 2018. Her research interests include not only speculative fiction but also life writing, and especially literature written by marginalized authors and poets.
- ▶ **Manuela Neuwirth** is an advanced master's student of English and American Studies at the University of Graz, Austria. She has spent an academic year at the University of Minnesota and has so far presented papers at conferences in Austria, Germany, Croatia, Turkey, and the United States. Her bachelor's thesis – "Cancer Culture: The American Way of Death in *Breaking Bad* and *The Big C*" – partly reflects her research interests, which include Television and Film Studies, Health and Illness Studies, and the Gothic. Her MA thesis investigates the representation of the extraterrestrial as a liminal figure in *The X-Files*.

- **Angelika Schneider** is a graduate student of English and American Studies at the University of Klagenfurt. Her main research interests are in the area of feminism, language and gender, discourse analysis, and comic studies. Her work focuses specifically on the representation of feminism in the Golden Age Period of *Wonder Woman*.
- **Ewa Ścibior** is a PhD candidate at the University of Warsaw. She earned her MA in 2015 for a dissertation on masculinity in the films of Wes Anderson. In 2017, she published an article in *Polish Journal for American Studies* entitled "The Representations of Drag Queen Characters in Pre-Stonewall Literature." In 2018, she took part in two conferences: *Sexual Revolutions – Sexual Politics* in Ghent, Belgium, where she presented a paper entitled "Gender and Liberation in John Rechy's Works" and *HCA Spring Academy* in Heidelberg, Germany, delivering a presentation on "Hypermasculinity and Drag in American Literature of the 1970s."
- **Nari Shelekpavev** is the 2018 Einstein Fellow at the Einstein Forum and Daimler & Benz Foundation; a PhD Candidate in History at Université de Montréal since 2013 (submission stage); an Associate Doctoral Fellow at the International Research and Training Group 'Diversity' (2016-2019) formed by Universities of Trier-Saarland and Université de Montréal. In the past Doctoral Fellow-in-Residence at the Canadian Center for Architecture; Research Fellow at Free University of Berlin (2016-2017) etc. PhD thesis title: "Ottawa, Brasília, Astana: the Invention of post-Imperial Capital Cities, 1850-2000." MA: EHESS and Charles University in Prague (2013); ML: Université Paris 2 Panthéon Assas (2013).
- **Sigrid Thomsen** did one BA in Comparative Literature and one in Philosophy at the University of Vienna, with semesters abroad at the University of Bergen, Norway, and at the University of Chicago. She got her MA in Comparative Literature (Africa/Asia) from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) at the University in London. She currently pursues a doctorate on Caribbean-American literature as part of the research platform "Mobile Cultures and Societies" at the University of Vienna.
- **Gergely Vörös** (1992, Bratislava, Slovakia) is a postgraduate student at the University of Bristol and at Comenius University in Bratislava. In Bristol, he is just about to finish his MA course in English Literature, whilst in Bratislava, he has just passed his first year as an MA student of English and Philosophy. His interests are centred around the topics that arise at the intersection of literature and philosophy. Currently, he is working on a project comparing Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* and *Against the Day*.
- **Si Whybrew** (pronouns: "they/them/their") is a research assistant and graduate student at the University of Graz and is working on a dissertation project entitled: *Transitioning into the Future? Trans Potentialities in North American Speculative Fiction from 1993 to 2018*.

Recent academic trends point to the increasing importance of interdisciplinary approaches and multi-faceted perspectives. The focus on intersectionality in gender studies, the shift in cultural studies towards transnational approaches and decolonizing methodologies, or the transmedial expansion of narratology, to name just a few, all engender an expansive critical perspective that transgresses the boundaries of individual disciplines and theoretical discourses. These trends exemplify a desire to bridge the gaps between academic fields and promote a self-reflexive engagement with their respective limitations.

This workshop seeks to explore the dynamic interrelations connecting the variety of theoretical discourses that currently dominate the field of American Studies. As last year's AYA conference illustrated, the diversified and multi-disciplinary "Future(s) of American Studies" include cultural studies and (trans)national perspectives to body and gender politics as well as innovative approaches to film/comic/literary studies. This year's AYA workshop provides the opportunity for in-depth investigations of current trends in contemporary American studies by placing a focus on shifting dynamics in the field. It encourages participants to engage with critical interdisciplinary perspectives that re-negotiate established cultural categories while directing attention to transgressions and fluid boundaries. This enables broader and more inclusive perspectives on topical research issues. Against the backdrop of their own research focus, we invite participants to discuss the gaps that separate disciplines, media, and cultures and approach them as subversive spaces to negotiate meaning.

ORGANIZERS

"Shifting Dynamics of American Studies" is organized by Austria's Young Americanists, hosted by the Department of English and American Studies at the University of Salzburg, and coordinated by AYA's local representatives Elisabeth Krieger and Christoph Straub.

- ▶ **Elisabeth Krieger** is a PhD student at the department of American studies at the University of Salzburg. She has received her Bachelor's degree in English and American Studies from the University of Graz and holds a Master's degree in "English Studies and the Creative Industries" from the University of Salzburg. Her PhD project focuses on the transmedial representation of women's autobiographical subjectivities in graphic narratives and their adaptations. Elisabeth's research interests include Gender and Women studies, Comic and Media studies as well as Narratology.
- ▶ **Christoph Straub** is a PhD student at the Department of English and American Studies at Salzburg University. In his research, he is most interested in postcolonial criticism, film studies, and Indigenous studies. His dissertation project focuses on decolonizing strategies in contemporary Indigenous films from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the US. Christoph holds an MA in "English Studies and the Creative Industries" from Salzburg University and a BA in English Studies and South Asian Studies from Heidelberg University.



AUSTRIA'S YOUNG AMERICANISTS

Austria's Young Americanists (AYA) is a network for graduate students in the field of American Studies at Austrian universities. The network is affiliated with the Austrian Association for American Studies and part of a general initiative undertaken by the European Association for American Studies that aims at making research on the PhD level across Europe more transparent. First and foremost, AYA is designed to enhance the communication between students at Austrian universities and to make information on the ongoing research more accessible.

AYA BOARD

- › **Silke Jandl & Barbora Orlická** University of Graz
- › **Roberta Hofer & Christian Stenico** University of Innsbruck
- › **Elisabeth Kriebler & Christoph Straub** University of Salzburg
- › **Helena Oberzaucher & Eva Schörgenhuber** University of Vienna



AUSTRIA'S YOUNG AMERICANISTS

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