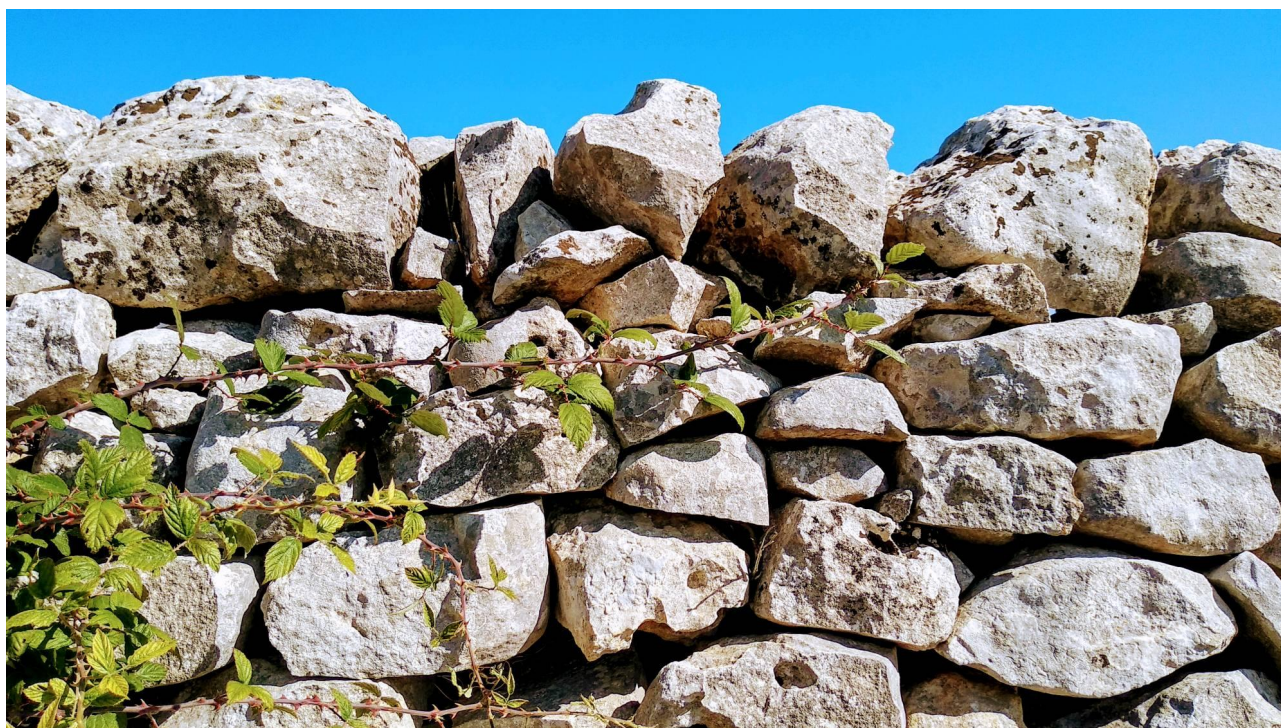


25th AISNA Biennial Conference
***Gate(d)Ways. Enclosures, Breaches and Mobilities
Across U.S. Boundaries and Beyond***

SDS of Foreign Languages and Literatures, Ragusa, September 26-28, 2019



CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Thursday 26th

8,30 Registration

9,30 AULA MAGNA - Greetings and Opening Remarks

10,00 Plenary Lecture 1

Ira Dworkin – Texas A&M University

“Scholar/Soldier/Fugitive: At the Breaches and Boundaries of U.S. Citizenship”

11,00 Coffee Break

11,30 - Classrooms 1-8 - **Panel Session 1:**

Panel 1 - Photography and American Culture Within and Beyond Walls

Panel 2 - Supernatural Passages Across Enclosures in Science Fiction Literature

Panel 3 - Security, Control, and Containment: Tales of Hope and Despair

Panel 10.1 - “There was a big high wall there that tried to stop me”: American Music Across the Wall

Panel 21 - Gateways and Gatekeepers: American Institutions Abroad

Panel 5.1 - Contested Belongings, Border Identities, and the Nation-State: Arab and Muslim Americans in the 20th and 21st Century

Panel 13.1 - Walls as Tropes of Separation and Contact in American Literature

Panel 19.1 - Tearing Through the Fabric of Things: What Lies Outside, Beyond, Beneath the Page and the Screen

1,15 Lunch Break

3,00 - AULA MAGNA - **Plenary Lecture 2**

Paola Boi – University of Cagliari

“A Rap on Time(s) and Distance: James Baldwin and the Perilous Journey of Love. Unspeakable Things Spoken”

4,00 - Classrooms 1-8 - **Panel Session 2:**

Panel 4.1 - Urban Borders: Relocating the Boundary to the Urban Milieu in American Literature and Culture

Panel 5.2 - Contested Belongings, Border Identities, and the Nation-State: Arab and Muslim Americans in the 20th and 21st Century

Panel 7 - Considering Violence Within Domestic Walls to Pursue An Ethics and Politics of Nonviolence

Panel 9 - Beyond Bricks and Concrete: Regenerating Walls and Barriers

Panel 10.2 - “There was a big high wall there that tried to stop me”: American Music Across the Wall

Panel 13.2 - Walls as Tropes of Separation and Contact in American Literature

Panel 18 - Beyond Walls and Enclosures: Social Justice and Literary Experimentalism in Early Black Speculative Fiction

Panel 20.1 - Borders and Diversity

5,45 Short Break

6,00 - AULA MAGNA - **Workshop:** “Journal of American Studies in Italy”

Launch of *RSajournal*, Issue 30

Launch of *JamIt!*, Issue 1

Friday 27th

9,30 – AULA MAGNA - **Plenary Lecture 3**

Erika Lee – University of Minnesota

“The Crisis of Xenophobia, Past and Present”

10,30 Coffee Break

11,00 Round Table

“Frontiera/Frontiere: Il Mediterraneo come scenario globale”

(*language: Italian*)

1,00 Lunch Break

2,15 - Classrooms 1-8 - **Panel Session 3:**

Panel 4.2 - Urban Borders: Relocating the Boundary to the Urban Milieu in American Literature and Culture

Panel 6 - Gates(d)ways in “Pre-occupied Spaces”: Exploring Signs of Ethnicity in American Cities

Panel 8 – Decolonizing the Digital Archive

Panel 11 - From Gatekeeping to Border Crossing: Translating Americanness for Italian Readers

Panel 12 - Milestones in Italian Americana: di Donato's *Christ in Concrete* and Puzo's *The Godfather*

Panel 14 - Narratives Across Borders: Generic and Epistemological Breaches in 21st Century North-American Literature

Panel 16 - Crossing Borders, Challenging America: Political Space and Women's Authorship as an Act of Resistance

Panel 17.1 - Dwelling on Thresholds: Exploring, Trespassing Liminal Places

4,00 AULA MAGNA: Aisna Meeting - Election of Aisna Board (2020-22)

8,30 Conference Dinner

Saturday 28th

9,30 - AULA MAGNA - **Plenary Lecture 4**

José David Saldívar – Stanford University

“The US-Mexico Border: Tear Down the Wall”

10,30 Coffee Break

11,00 - Classrooms 1-8 - **Panel Session 4:**

Panel 17.2 - Dwelling on Thresholds: Exploring, Trespassing Liminal Places

Panel 19.2 - Tearing Through the Fabric of Things: What Lies Outside, Beyond, Beneath the Page and the Screen

Panel 20.2– Borders and Diversity

Panel 22 - Walls and Breaches: Gender, Race and Class within American Society and Politics in the 19th and 20th century

Panel 15 - The Political and Socio-Cultural Relevance of Frontiers

Panel 23 - From Island to Mainland: Defying Visible and Invisible Borders in Caribbean-American Literature and Visual Arts

Panel 24 - The Politics of Walled Geographies/Communities in Contemporary US Cinema

Panel 25- “Cracks in the wall”: The Circulation of People and Ideas during the Cold War

1,00 Closing Remarks

3,00 Social Trip to Noto (*requires an extra-night in Ragusa*)

PANELS

PANEL 1

Photography and American Culture Within and Beyond Walls

Coordinators:

Vincenzo Bavaro - University of Naples - "L'Orientale" (vbavaro@unior.it)

Serena Fusco - University of Naples - "L'Orientale" (sfusco@unior.it)

As a counterpart to a tradition of American photography that privileges the representation of open spaces and unrestrained movement, this panel proposes to explore cases in which, in the history of American culture, photographic and/or para-photographic practices of representation have dealt with the existence of enclosed, secluded, segregated spaces and/or restrained movement— reflecting, documenting, reinforcing, critiquing, and/or subverting such configurations of space and foreclosed/limited mobility. From portraits of slaves to mugshots, from medical documentation to immigration checkpoints, photographic practices can contribute to buttress or justify the confinement of humans within borders and walls, for instance in the case of ghettos, prisons, detention camps, interrogation centers, and physical and/or mental health institutions. On the other hand, photography can also have or claim a role in opening breaches in walls, documenting or bringing about escapes from confinement or attempts at gaining freedom. Such potential emerges, for instance, in Jacob Riis' or Lewis Hines' photographic immersion into the confined spaces inhabited by workers and immigrants; in the use of the photographic medium in prison activism; or in the thematization and usage of photography in works that create counter-memory, illuminating enclosed zones of history and blurring the lines between biography, autobiography, and creative art – like graphic novels such as Art Spiegelman's *Maus* or Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home*, or Maxine Hong Kingston's fictions/memoirs *The Woman Warrior* and *China Men*. Our papers will discuss photographic work, or tackle the presence and/or thematization of photography in/through other media such as literature, cinema, graphic narratives, multimedial art etc., dealing with photography's potential for hypostatizing, but also rediscussing, existing in/balances between closure and openness, between confinement and the possibility of transit, passage, movement.

Papers:

Vincenzo Bavaro - University of Naples "L'Orientale"

"A Delayed Shutter-Camera": Making Up Memories in Maxine Hong Kingston's *ChinaMen*

Daniela Fargione - University of Turin

"Borders cannot be photographed": Diasporic Timespace and Phototextuality in AleksandarHemon's and Velibor Vožović's *The Lazarus Project*

Serena Fusco - University of Naples "L'Orientale"

The Timeless Time and The Far Wider Moment: Bruce Jackson and Prison Photography

Albert Latorella Lehner - University of Fukui

Government-sponsored Photography during the FDR Presidency: Exposure of Walls that Beg Tearing Down

PANEL 2

Supernatural Passages Across Enclosures in Science Fiction Literature

Coordinator:

Iren Boyarkina - University of Tuscia - DEIM, estel20@mail.ru

Science fiction is one of the few literary genres very closely concerned with the analysis and improvement of society. Many significant works of science fiction can be viewed as a kind of a scientific research laboratory in which the important trends in the development of the society are studied, analysed and extrapolated to an imaginary world for further analysis. This imaginary world is a metaphor, a model, which tests the viability of concepts and ideas of a science fiction writer. In the case of negative trends observed in the society in the zero/primary world, the author singles them out, exaggerates and extrapolates them to the imaginary world, thus creating a dystopia in most of cases. In doing so, the author tries to draw the attention of the society to the existing problems, warning about the negative consequences if no measures are taken in due time. In other cases, the author tries to suggest his ideas to improve the society and explores the possibilities for a better world for everyone.

The subject of supernatural passages across enclosures is rather common in science fiction literature. Most of the times, sf writers strictly follow the Standard Cosmological model, but when it is necessary to find a solution to a fatal problem, often threatening the existence of human species, they resort to hypothesis of parallel universes, multiple universes, etc.

describe worm holes as hypothetical passages between universes. To find a problem solution, the protagonist must cross a supernatural passage to another world. Projected back to the zero world, it means that often walls and boundaries must be overcome in order to find the right solution for the current problems in the society.

This panel analyses some sf novels by Arthur Clarke, Philip Dick, I. Asimov, and other American sf writers, which deal with supernatural passages.

Papers:

Ljudmila Djukic – Independent Scholar

Demolishing the Exhibition or the World

Alexey Dodsworth-Magnavita - Ca' Foscari University of Venice and Universidade de São Paulo

Everett's Many Worlds Interpretation of Quantum Mechanics in Science Fiction

Mladen M. Jakovljević - University of Priština in Kosovska Mitrovica, Serbia

Valis: The Paradigm of the Phildickian the Multiverse

Francesco Nieddu - University of Cagliari

Choices as Frontiers: The Meaning of the Parallel Universe in Joanna Russ's *The Female Man*

PANEL 3

Space, Security, Control, and Containment: Tales of Hope and Despair

Panel Coordinator:

Anni Calcara - Doctoral candidate "Social and Cultural Encounters (SCE)" - University of Eastern Finland,

anniras@student.uef.fi

Challenges to security, whether concrete or abstract, disrupt the *status quo*, often leading to tightening control. Typically, dystopian novels are built upon themes of security, control, and containment, yet, they arise in all genres of literature in varying degrees. The subjects of control are usually ordinary citizens, but often in a defined space they are more likely to be "others", such as women, members or (often non-Caucasian) minorities, or animals.

Containment and control are not limited to those literally imprisoned. The subject of control does not have to commit an action of disturbance. For instance, animals are detained due to their existence as non-humans. Painfully similarly, various ethnic groups have been subject of containment to provide (the feeling of) security to others. Further, individuals with disruptive thinking need to be monitored or eradicated. In the end, control is often escaped or overcome in one way or another.

Papers:

Nicolangelo Becce - University of Fukui

From "Parlor Walls" to Social Media Walls: Language and Dystopia in Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* and Its Media Adaptations

Rochel L. Gasson - Duquesne University in Pittsburgh

Abulrazak Gurnah's Paradise: Consideration and Employment of the Bible as a Pedagogical Tool for Contemporary World Literature

Daniel Pommier Vincelli - University of Rome "La Sapienza"

Breaking the Wall of Secrecy: The Present and Future of the Freedom of Information Act

Eleonora Rao - University of Salerno

Seeking an Untenable Security in Margaret Atwood's Recent Fiction and Poetry

PANEL 4

Urban Borders: Relocating the Boundary to the Urban Milieu in American Literature and Culture

Panel Coordinators:

Ana M^a Manzanás Calvo - University of Salamanca - amanzana@usal.es

Ewa Antoszek - Maria Curie-Skłodowska University - antoszek@poczta.umcs.lublin.pl

In Karen T. Yamashita's *Tropic of Orange*, Buzzworm, an African American character, talks about the invisible yet productive borders he is aware of in the city. Spatial demarcations do not have to be officially drawn, but everybody knows that if you step over the invisible front line, you can get implicated, arrested, jailed, or killed. Similarly, in Ernesto Quiñonez's *Chango's Fire*, Julio comments that you would be arrested on the very spot if you were to set foot

on white people's lawns. Though invisible to the eye, urban boundaries split and separate different parts of city. This relocation of the geopolitical boundary or edge opens a reconsideration of the workings of the border as a dividing mechanism. Borders, Patricia Price claims in *Dry Place*, have turned conspicuous, flexible and fluid. For Price the location of new boundaries requires thinking about lines of separation as more fluid sorts of places, since they do not stay put in visible geographical manifestations. They function in what she calls a *transverse* fashion, one that conflates visual, architectural, economic, and racial segregation. Urban borders may get activated in the face of the "wrong" kind of crosser, whenever s/he is entering forbidden territory, what Homi Bhabha terms the "*Heim* of the national culture and its unisonant discourse." The notion of the border then moves from the exterior to the interior border.

Papers:

Session 1

MaryJo Bona - Stony Brook University

Forbidden Territory and Racial Crossers in Kym Ragusa's *The Skin Between Us* and Claudia Rankine's *Citizen*

Izabella Kimak & Zbigniew Mazur - Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Lublin, Poland

Native Sons (and Daughters) and Their Land: Constructions of Black Urbanity in American Literature and Film

Ana M^a Manzanar and Jesús Benito - Universidad de Valladolid

Urban Borders

Session 2

Ewa Antoszek - Maria Curie-Skłodowska University

From the Exterior Border to the Interior Borders: Consuelo Jiménez Underwood's *LA Borderline*

Angelo Capasso - Accademia di Belle Arti di Urbino and University of Rome "La Sapienza"

SoHo, a *Non-u-mental* Neighborhood

Esen Kara - Yasar University, Izmir, Turkey

The Coyote and the Pilgrim: Production of Nature in the Garden

PANEL 5

Contested Belongings, Border Identities, and the Nation-State: Arab and Muslim Americans in the 20th and 21st Century

Panel Coordinators:

Andrea Carosso - University of Turin - andrea.carosso@unito.it

Cinzia Schiavini - University of Milan - cinzia.schiavini@unimi.it

Approximately 3.5-million strong today, the Arab-American community in the United States has transitioned over the last 20 years from an invisible group within the (presumed) American melting pot spanning multiple generations of immigrants, mostly perceived as "white", to a racialized "problem minority" and an alleged threat to national security. Recent scholarship has traced this construction of an "Arab Other" as "The Enemy" back to the Oil Wars and US involvement in Middle Eastern politics in the 1960s and 70s.

Two decades into the 21st century, Arab Americans and Muslim Americans - a group that subsumes part (but not all) of Americans of Arab descent together with other, non-Arab minorities - remain an embattled minority. Yet, their voices have gained national prominence through the work of intellectuals (the late Edward Said, as well as Moustafa Bayoumi, Louise Cinkar, Nadine Naber and many others), political activists (Linda Sarsour) and, most recently, a new generation of young, newly elected Congresswomen (Rashida Tlaib, Ilhan Omar) whose social and political activism is pushing to revive American liberalism from decades of lethargy.

Arab and Muslim Americans in the 20th and 21st centuries are the embodiment of the center-periphery dynamics of American culture, i.e. communities that have risen up to question the place and status of borders and liminality – social, cultural, mental, religious – within the American body politic, and the ways in which liminal identities can acquire agency to push for new social and political agendas, as this call for panels suggests, "on both U.S. national and global stages", interrogating the meaning of "home" and "abroad", "us" and "them", citizenship and belonging, the very notion of "nation-state" as well as its borders.

Our contributions address, but are not limited to, the topics of Arab and Muslim-American lives, literature, arts in the 20th and 21st century, North American, Transnational Literature and Trans-border textualities in the Arab and Muslim-American context; post 9/11 geopolitical strategies of securitization/governmentality; US race relations, ethnicities and citizenship and the Arab world; Individual and collective identities in the Global War on Terror.

Papers:

Session 1: Contested Belongings, Border Identities, and the Nation-State

Andrea Carosso - University of Turin

'Where we are ... not where we are from': transatlantic counternarratives on the modern Palestinian experience

Cinzia Schiavini - University of Milan

The Void Center: Reconfiguring Transnational Relations between the US and the Muslim World in Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and H M Naqvi's *Home Boy*

Mirella Vallone - University of Perugia

Bridging the gap: Translation and diaspora in Arab-American poetry

Session 2: US Encounters with the Arab World

Elisabetta Bini - University of Naples Federico II

Frontier Masculinities and Corporate Domesticity: Gender and Labor in American Company Towns in Libya (1955-1981)

Lisa marchi – University of Trento

Edgy Positions: US Writers Retold, Reimagined, and Relocated

Jan Marta - University of Toronto

Literary Representations of Arab-American Relations: Challenges to Identities

PANEL 6

Gates(d)ways in "Pre-occupied Spaces": Exploring Signs of Ethnicity in American Cities

Panel Coordinator:

Francesco Chianese, Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence, California State University Long Beach,

Francesco.Chianese@csulb.edu

This panel seeks inspiration from the recent book by Teresa Fiore, *Pre-Occupied Spaces: Remapping Italy's Transnational Migrations and Colonial Legacies* (2017) and reconceptualize Fred Gardaphe's concept at the base of *Italians Signs, American Streets* (1997) in urban spaces recognizable as marked by ethnic or multi-ethnic identity. While centred on the Italian experience of migration, Fiore's book provides a useful framework that can be extended to read places as spaces for the analyses of stories, which are not limited to the Italian case. Furthermore, it offers the possibility to recognize Italian signs in multi-ethnic communities located in the United States, as well as to recognize signs of other ethnicity in Italian-American communities.

On those premises, this panel aims to explore the possibilities offered by Fiore's and Gardaphe's frameworks, to enlarge the context of migration which they specifically identify beyond the "gates" and the "walls" defined by the Italian diaspora, as it has been conceptualized by Donna Gabaccia (2000). Our panel will try to answer questions such as the following:

- How writers, directors and artists have perceived "gates" and "walls" that define the limits of a specific ethnic identity in multi-ethnic communities of American cities?
- What stories those urban spaces have told to us?
- Which spaces we recognize as Italian spaces, and which ones as American spaces? What makes possible to identify "gates" and "walls" that define them?
- How the assimilation to the American mainstream has helped to "remove" gates while conversely, it built new ones? How ethnic communities have built "gates" to replace other "gates"?

Papers:

Francesco Chianese - California State University Long Beach

Angelenos? What's That? Looking at Los Angeles through Italian Eyes

Stefano Luconi - University of Genoa

Remapping "Little Italies": Ethnic Identity and Urban Spaces in Italian America

Francesca De Lucia - Minzu University of China

"Proper old Boston was behind us": Race, Gentrification and Ethnic Identity in Anthony Giardina's *White Guys*

Rosemary Serra, University of Trieste

Racial Discrimination of the Italians in America and the Privileges of Being White

PANEL 7

Considering Violence Within Domestic Walls to Pursue An Ethics and Politics of Nonviolence

Panel Coordinators:

Giovanna Covi - University of Trento, giovanna.covi@unitn.it

Cristiana Pagliarusco - University of Trento, c.pagliarusco@unitn.it

Domestic walls have ears and eyes through which both insiders and outsiders may listen and watch—and take action to break through. This panel invites reflections upon the domestic space—its protection, sufferance and comfort, as well as its violence, nostalgia and fear—to focus on the political relationship between the domestic and the public space and to speculate on the epistemic frame that may host an ethics of nonviolence. While the elaboration on the personal that is political may date back to Betty Friedan's *Feminine Mystique* (1963) to bloom through second-wave feminism, consciousness-raising practices, the Redstocking and the Combahee River collectives and the noteworthy specifications highlighted by Patricia Hill Collins and bell hooks, the elaboration on the politics of the relationship between the private and the public, the domestic and society is calling for more careful attention. The inadequacy of public discourse on private matters explodes in relation to episodes of domestic violence against women and children.

Literature both examines the affects confined within the domestic wall and shows the emotions that breaking down the wall of domestic silence entails. Literature puts into words the relationship between public and private by showing the empowering relation of the personal with the political but rejecting the simplistic equation of personal with private and political with public. The examples range from Toni Morrison's narratives that often depict incidents of domestic violence within a public context of racist and sexist oppression to Laura Kasischke's poems that voice acts of breaching through the domestic wall of fear in search for the human. The panel will host, among others, interpretations that regard non-systemic philosophical positions that may span from Leela Gandhi's postcolonial definition of revolutionary nonviolence to Jacques Derrida's reflections on transcendental violence to show the way over the wall of domestic violence.

Papers:

Mario Bannoni - Independent Scholar

Margaret Fuller's Radical Evolution

Giovanna Covi - University of Trento

African American Women's Fiction and the Ethics of Nonviolence

Meltem Kiran-Raw - Başkent University/University of Ankara

Representing Child Brides: *National Geographic* and *Atlas*

Cristiana Pagliarusco - University of Trento

The Tragic Violence of Indifference: Changing Attitudes toward Witnessed Sufferance

PANEL 8

Decolonizing the Digital Archive

Panel Coordinators:

Sonia Di Loreto - University of Turin, sonia.diloreto@unito.it

Stefano Morello - The Graduate Center, CUNY, veritas44@gmail.com

In recent years we have witnessed a proliferation of digital archival work – often (but not always) in the form of open access platforms developed to gather, preserve, and share historical documents. The very nature of open accessibility counters a rhetoric of retreat and the construction of barriers among knowledge producers and consumers – by refusing ownership over its content and seeking collaborative and communal engagement in both interpretational and curatorial work, open access digital archives are often decentralized archives that provide modes for democratic access, exchange, and co-construction of knowledge.

As digital archives are beginning to define the work that we do, an interdisciplinary effort, spearheaded by digital humanists, has increasingly focused on theorizing the affordances offered by the digital form and the power structures and silences of the archive in colonial and capitalist knowledge regimes. Projects such as the *Early Caribbean Digital Archive (ECDA)*, *Colored Conventions*, and *Chicana Por Mi Raza* have proposed different tactics – such as remixing, reassembling, and decentralizing – to decolonize the archive and violate the epistemic boundaries and the structure knowledge that it seeks to enforce.

In this panel, we hope to explore questions at the intersections of theory and praxis, as we consider how digital tools can be theorized, hacked, and used in service of decolonizing the archive. This panel seeks to explore not only digital archives as repositories of historical document, but also their capacity to collect real-time produced knowledge. We will

also look at pedagogical practices based on digital archival work,, digital platforms that speak to multiple constituencies and online projects that serve as Open Educational Resources.

Papers:

Sonia Di Loreto - University of Turin

Decolonizing the Archive: Ethics and Practices

Alexander Dunst - University of Paderborn

Decolonizing the Sixties? The “Congress on the Dialectics of Liberation” and Transnational Archives in a Digital Age

Stefano Morello - The Graduate Center – CUNY

Towards a Punk Epistemology: Reflections on the Making of the East Bay Punk Digital Archive

Florian Puglisi - University of Catania

“PennSound and the Frontier of Digital Phonotextuality”

PANEL 9

Beyond Bricks and Concrete: Regenerating Walls and Barriers

Panel Coordinators:

Carla Francellini - University of Siena – University of Rome “Tor Vergata”, carla.francellini@gmail.com

Elisabetta Marino - University of Rome “Tor Vergata”, marino@lettere.uniroma2.it

Whether consciously or subconsciously, walls have long exerted a dramatic impact on passers-by, affected by the feelings of isolation, loss, and remoteness (or, to quote Don DeLillo, *lontananza*) they forcefully evoke. Nonetheless, these artificial barriers, separating peoples and nations, have often been endowed with an undermining potential: indeed, they have become larger-than-life canvases, where identities are projected and asserted, and dissent is graphically exhibited. The Berlin Wall and the Chinese Wall, with their inscriptions and graffiti as ways of articulating protest, are two outstanding examples of this phenomenon. Furthermore, from the Mexican Muralism art movement of Diego Rivera, David Siqueiros, and José Orozco, to the murals and cave paintings in numerous archeological sites dating back to Upper Paleolithic, walls have long acted as mirrors, bound to reproduce the ever-changing identities of transient ethnic groups across the world.

This panel sets out to explore the many and various ways artists have strived to regenerate walls and barriers, thus subverting the initial intentions of their creators. Special emphasis will be placed on the role walls have played in separating/juxtaposing ethnic communities within the great American metropolis in the XX century. Indeed, world-famous murals can be found in Mexico, New York City, Philadelphia, Belfast, Derry, Los Angeles, Nicaragua, Cuba, and India; all of them seem to perform an important social function, as transgressive means of communication between members of socially, ethnically, and racially divided communities in times of tension and conflict.

Papers:

Pirjo Ahokas - University of Turku

The Vietnam War and the Wall: Loss, Trauma and Memory in *People of the Whale* and *In Country*

Carla Francellini - University of Siena

From Bartleby's “Dead Wall Reveries” and Charlotte Perkins Gilman's Nightmares in “The Yellow Wallpaper” to Sylvia Plath's “Glass Walls”

Elisabetta Marino - University of Rome “Tor Vergata”

Words for Freedom: Prison Poems, from Angel Island to Hanoi Hilton

Anna Cadoni - University of Cagliari - Bowdoin College

In & Out of the Steel Mill: The Working-class in Lynn Nottage's *Sweat*

PANEL 10

“There was a big high wall there that tried to stop me”: American Music Across the Wall

Panel Coordinators:

Gianna Fusco - University of L'Aquila, mg.fusco@gmail.com

Enrico Botta - University of L'Aquila, enricobotta@hotmail.com

In 2011 Costica Bradatan wrote that “Walls [...] are built not for security, but for a *sense* of security [...]. What a wall satisfies is not so much a material need as a mental one. Walls protect people not from barbarians, but from anxieties

and fears, which can often be more terrible than the worst vandals” (“NYT”, 27 November 2011).

The material and metaphorical dimensions underlined by Bradatan have characterized the idea of wall in artistic terms. In particular, music has always established a close relationship with it and the album *The Wall* seemed to have explored all the possible physical and psychological, as well as political and ideological variations. However, Roger Waters’s intention to play his concept album along the US-Mexican border to protest against President Trump marks a reconfiguration of wall in material terms, which is in line with the American and Mexican percussionists’ cross-border concert in January 2018 and the sound sculptor Glenn Weyant’s experiments with the fence between the two countries played as a musical instrument (“Loudwire,” 10 January 2019).

The panel aims at reflecting on the relationship between music and borders, walls, fences and barriers in the United States, trying to investigate the phenomenon through its historical evolution and its geographical differentiation taking into account not only the possible metaphorical and symbolic meanings, but also the physical and material ones.

Actually, these two dimensions characterize the wall in Woody Guthrie’s *This Land Is Your Land*: “There was a big wall there that tried to stop me,” a line the author decided not to perform for a long time. Many years later, during Barack Obama’s presidential inauguration, Bruce Springsteen and Pete Seeger sang the song re-inserting the verse. In 2009 it seemed like an invitation and a hope; now it would only be a new warning.

Papers:

Session 1

Enrico Botta - University of L’Aquila

“If These Walls Could Sing: American Songwriters and the Re-functionalization of Barriers”

Gianna Fusco - University of L’Aquila

Judas at/of the Border: José Limón’s *La Malinche* and *The Traitor*

Fulvia Sarnelli - Bowdoin College

Music for Our (Hi)stories: The Role of Art in Alex Kuo’s *Chinese Opera*

Session 2

Alessandro Buffa – University of Naples, “L’Orientale”

“Runaway Blues”: Black Women’s Blues and Fugitive Dreams

Gianpaolo Chiriaco - University of Innsbruck

Crossing Borders in The South of Chicago: The Musical Works of Theater Gates

Giuseppe Polise - University of Naples “L’Orientale”

When Black Women Get the Blues: Redefining Sexuality and Representation in Post-Civil-Rights Women Writers

PANEL 11

From Gatekeeping to Border Crossing: Translating Americanness for Italian Readers

Panel Coordinators:

Valeria Gennero - University of Bergamo, valeria.gennero@unibg.it

Cinzia Scarpino - University of Turin, cinzia.scarpino@unito.it

At the intersection of recent studies on reception of foreign novels, cultural translation studies and studies of the literary transfer lies the shared assumption that both the commercial success and literary reputation of a foreign book and its author are largely constructed by the collaboration of critics, publishers, agents and editors involved in bringing a foreign text to a specific national audience and literary system.

In this critical framework it is useful to think of these actors/agents/advocates of the literary field and its channels of production and reception as gatekeepers of literary tastes whose selection processes for translation help condition not only which texts will be chosen – raising questions about the diverse voices of a given national literature – but also how such texts will be approached by readers in terms of literary genres and stylistic conventions. Choosing which book to translate – and which not – is thus historically inscribed with issues related to the publisher’s agenda, its role as culture broker, and, ultimately, with the definition of a national literary canon.

To define the presence of American literature in the Italian publishing market in the 20th and 21st centuries as predominant is hardly an exaggeration. Be them romance-novels, detective stories, noir, sensation fiction, modernist masterpieces or more canonical works, American books have always had the lion’s share of translations in the Italian publishing market, often standing as a recognizable shorthand for bestselling trade fiction.

This panel will tackle the historically constructed relations between diverse cultural agents – authors, publishers, translators – within a transnational context and address how certain aesthetic and cultural understandings of the “American-ness” of American literature have been negotiated on the Italian book market and circulated among Italian

readers.

Papers:

Anna De Biasio - University of Bergamo

A Storyteller's Italian Story: Sherwood Anderson (1931-2019)

Marina Morbiducci - University of Rome "La Sapienza"

The Strange (and Reverse) Case of Jhumpa Lahiri

Andrea Romanzi - University of Reading and University of Bristol

Rivoluzione Beat: Fernanda Pivano's Cultural Action Brings the American Beat Generation to Italy

Cinzia Scarpino - University of Turin

Driven to Tears: The Melodramatic Imagination of 1930's American Bestsellers in the

Mondadori Catalogue (*Antonio Adverse*, *Via col vento*, *La grande pioggia*)

PANEL 12

Milestones in Italian Americana: di Donato's *Christ in Concrete* and Puzo's *The Godfather*

Panel Coordinator:

Alan Gravano - Rocky Mountain University - alan.gravano@outlook.com

The year 2019 represents the eightieth anniversary of Pietro di Donato's novel *Christ in Concrete* and the fiftieth anniversary of Mario Puzo's *The Godfather*. Paul Lauter's *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*, Fifth Edition, and *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, Eighth Edition, contain di Donato's short story version published in 1937; however, neither anthology include Puzo or any of his writings.

Papers:

Alan Gravano - Rocky Mountain University

Enclosures and Breaches in Mario Puzo's *The Godfather*: The Hybridization of Luca Brasi

Fred L. Gardaphé - Queens College & John D. Calandra Italian American Institute

Christ in Concrete at 80: Transnational Modernism and the Italian/American Writer

Anthony Julian Tamburri - Queens College & John D. Calandra Italian American Institute

Dancing on the Hyphen, Trying Not to Fall Off: Pietro di Donato's *Christ in Concrete* and Identifying Characteristics

PANEL 13

Walls as Tropes of Separation and Contact in American Literature

Panel Coordinators:

Paola Loreto - University of Milan - paola.loreto@unimi.it

Margarida Cadima - University of Glasgow - mcadima@gm.slc.edu

Strictly speaking, the definition of the word "wall" suggests a separation as well as an enclosure. But what if the wall is represented not as a permanent division, but rather a permeable membrane between the inside and outside?

What kind of contact takes place through the wall and despite it? What is the epistemological relevance of the wall in literature?

"Something there is that doesn't love a wall" is the opening line of Robert Frost's poem "Mending Wall." The scrivener Bartleby, in Melville's most memorable tale, chooses to spend most of his time staring out of his office's window at a brick wall. How has the wall been portrayed in American literature? How does this fit in and compare to the wider context of World Literature? The wall can function as spatial and generic demarcation and at the same time it can represent a desire for transgression and hybridity. The US myth of the frontier is in itself a metaphorical wall of separation that has been negotiated and renegotiated, written and rewritten – and thus reappropriated – over time. Moreover, notions of "walls" are in constant evolution, and can be considered as being the product of historical, social and political relations, weaving a network of representations and mental images.

This panel will specifically focus on critical relations between interior and exterior, the known and the unknown, form and formlessness, flux and fixity, absence and presence, real and imaginary geographies, forms or acts of "translation" in the etymological sense of "carrying across." In the absence of a physical wall, what are the metaphorical representations of borders, margins, thresholds and gate(way)s? How might these be read as a creative re-use of walls?

Our panel includes papers on fiction and non-fiction, prose and poetry, translation, ecocriticism, geocriticism and spatial literary studies in American literature.

Papers:

Session 1

Margarida Cadima - University of Glasgow

Walls in the Desert! The Sublime Archaeology of Walls in Edith Wharton's "A Bottle of Perrier"

Maria Parrino - Ca' Foscari University of Venice

"That strange shadow on the wall." Doors and Walls in Mary E. Wilkins Freeman and Charlotte Perkins Gilman's Short Fiction

Alexandra Urakova - Collegium for Advanced Studies, University of Helsinki

Walling In /Walling Out: Poesque Haunted Spaces, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Edith Wharton, and American Imagination

Giulia Torricelli - University of Milan

A Wall Made of Words: Literature as a Means of Reconceptualizing the Animal/Human Dichotomy

Session 2

Manlio Della Marca - Ludwig-Maximilians Universität, Munich

The American Renaissance and Its Walls: From Poe's House of Usher to Thoreau's Wooden Cabin

Antonella Francini - Syracuse University in Florence

Walls that Rise and Fall in the Poetry of Jorie Graham and Claudia Rankine

Sonya Isaak - University of Heidelberg

Voices from the Other Side: Frost's "Mending Wall" in the Trump Era

Ginevra Paparoni - Independent Scholar

Sweeping Floods and Collapsing Walls: Joyce Carol Oates' Re-elaboration of Edward Taylor's Poetic Motives

PANEL 14

Narratives Across Borders: Generic and Epistemological Breaches in 21st Century North-American Literature

Panel Coordinators:

Pia Masiero - University of Venice Ca' Foscari - masiero@unive.it

Virginia Pignagnoli - "Juan de la Cierva" Research Fellow - University of Zaragoza - vpignagnoli@unizar.es

September 11, 2001 is often regarded as the cultural boundary marking the end of postmodernism and the beginning of a new literary period. But the metaphorical wall separating postmodern narratives from what comes after is not without breaches that highlight the many continuities between the two periods. For instance, sincerity has now supplanted postmodern irony, with scholars such as Lee Konstantinou arguing for the emergence of 'post-ironic' literature (2017) and Adam Kelly exploring the turn to sincerity (2016). Ironic language, however, has not yet disappeared. Despite the fact that 9/11 fostered before/after dynamics, it is a boundary signalling a shift of interest rather than a rupture, as Irmtraud Huber (2014: 6) points out. Indeed, many postmodern devices such as the mixing of genres and media are still employed in contemporary US literature, but not so much to expose and play with ontological boundaries - like postmodernist narratives - as to foreground issues of "relationality, the reader-writer relationship, and intersubjective problems" (Konstantinou 2017: 100).

This panel hosts contributions exploring the various attempts in North American literature and media at exploring narratives that breach clear-cut boundaries such as postmodernism/post- postmodernism, fiction/nonfiction, and irony/sincerity. How do these generic and epistemological border-crossing intersect with cultural and societal changes such as 9/11, the 2007 financial crisis, the digital revolution, and recent activist movements such as Me Too and Black Lives Matter? How are the current boundaries, walls, divisions, whether metaphorical or not, contributing to the shift of the cultural dominant after postmodernism? How are distinctions and binary categories reshuffled in light of the present historical period?

Papers:

Gioia Woods - Northern Arizona University

Bewildered: Agency, Sincerity, and Relationality in *The Overstory*

Marco Meneghelli - Independent Scholar

David Foster Wallace and His Readers: The Question of Border and “The Limit” in David Foster Wallace’s *Infinite Jest* and *Brief Interviews with Hideous Men*

Perri Giovannucci - American University in Dubai

Sensual and Virtual: Evolving Printed Voices in the Digital World

PANEL 15

The Political and Socio-Cultural Relevance of Frontiers

Panel Coordinators:

Chiara Migliori - Freie Universität Berlin - chiaramigliori@yahoo.com

This panel hosts papers that reflect on the political relevance of frontiers in the United States and Europe; its aim is to foster a discussion on the contrasting forces that seem to increasingly dominate our world: expansion and isolation, mobility and constraint.

In particular, our papers deal with the evolution of the frontier as pillar of the American identity, e.g. Indian Removal Act (1830)/The Winning of the West (1880); Manifest Destiny (1845)/The Turner Thesis (1893); The California Gold Rush (1848)/Mexican Cession (1848). How is the concept of frontier related to that of the wall, particularly when the latter is deployed as tool for raising political consensus, e.g. in the recent political discourse on the U.S.-Mexico border wall?

Our papers also investigate possible links between the American and the European refugee crisis: Are there any social, ethical or cultural similarities? The objective is to highlight challenges and possible scenarios that the loosening and/or fortifying up of borders trigger on either the American and European stages. We invite proposals belonging to different disciplines, from history to literary studies, from cultural studies to sociology and politics.

Papers:

Lorena Carbonara - University of Calabria

(Trans)Mediterranean: Perspectives on the Contemporary Discourse of Migration: A Focus on Nativism and Tribalism

Marija Krsteva - Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

Contemporary Biofictions about F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald

Chiara Migliori - Freie Universität Berlin

Christianity and the Frontier: Donald Trump’s Discourse and the Role of Christianity as Boundary-Marker

Stefan Rabitsch - University of Graz

El Sombrero Americano no Conoce Frontera: Western Hats as Trans-Regional/Cultural Fabric

PANEL 16

Crossing Borders, Challenging America: Political Space and Women’s Authorship as an Act of Resistance

Panel Coordinator:

Serena Mocchi - University of Bologna - serena.mocchi2@unibo.it

The relationship between women and political space in the United States has been characterized by alternate processes of inclusion and exclusion that, when historically analyzed, reveal the ambiguity of women’s condition: citizens but not fully included in citizenship. Indeed, while on the founding of the United States the Constitution formally recognized women as citizens, the law subjected them to the doctrine of *coverture* that effectively established their exclusion from the public sphere.

Nevertheless, how many strategies of resistance have women used since then to gradually acquire political spaces of agency for social change? They made their voices heard in women’s rights, abolitionist, suffragist and labor movements, muckraking journalism, second wave feminism, intersectional struggles - to mention just some of their main efforts throughout US history. At the root of this challenging attitude there was authorship, meant as an important means to reach and persuade a wide audience.

The panel especially aims at exploring the different forms of the complex relationship between female authorship and border crossing in the United States. On the one hand, female authorship allowed women to challenge social gender boundaries, to embrace spaces of autonomy of thought and action and finally enter the public debate as political subjects, agents or leaders. It happened in literature, journalism, academic research and teaching, political and social activism, as well as at grass-roots and top-down politics. On the other hand, female authorship has also been a way to cross the material borders of the State. Women migrants and travelers produced dissenting narratives of American

domestic and foreign policy that contributed to make public opinion aware of the intrinsic contradictions of the American government and its international leadership, encouraging reforms and creating new fluid spaces of national and racial identities, both inside and outside the US borders.

The panel therefore - by mainly using historical and interdisciplinary analysis - intends to raise questions on the ways in which female authorship, including different genres and pseudonyms, has served as a powerful rhetorical tool to challenge the status quo of American borders in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Papers:

Kristen Brill - Keele University

Wily Wenches and Respectable Rebels: Confederate Women in Europe (1861-65)

Paula Barba Guerrero - University of Salamanca

Ethics of Space: Staging Concentric Borders in Suzan-Lori Parks's *The Book of Grace*

Serena Mocchi - University of Bologna

Addressing Racial Conflict in Antebellum America: Women and Native Americans in Lydia Maria Child's and Margaret Fuller's Literary Works

Bruno Walter Renato Toscano - University of Bologna

Black Women Against Imperialism. The Transnational Struggle of the Third World Women's Alliance (1968-1977)

PANEL 17

Dwelling on Thresholds: Exploring, Trespassing Liminal Places

Panel Coordinators:

Gigliola Nocera - University of Catania - SDS of Foreign Languages and Literatures, Ragusa - noceragi@unict.it

Raffaella Malandrino - University of Catania - SDS of Foreign Languages and Literatures, Ragusa - rmalandr@unict.it

Thresholds inform loci where the American cultural and literary minds have contemplated nature and established connections as well as forms of control over it. They stay precisely where official, structural sites of residence/dwelling arise, or pose themselves as transitional domains - docks, front stoops, porches, doorways, - where humans and non-humans mark their presence and chart territories.

Thresholds may unfold a spatiality of public, mutually aware, interdependent and engaged entities, a place in which an ethics of interpersonal relations is structured and where, following Jacques Derrida's work (2000), hospitality is approached, experimented and experienced.

But where does lie the productivity of dwelling on thresholds? What subject positions and what circumstances unfold in such status of dwelling or trespassing *limens* fraught with both possibilities and risks? To which extent threshold dwelling incurs the risk of solipsism, or offers a contingent security which is, nonetheless, liable to disperse or explode? Since they signal a vital transition between the uncontrollable world outside and the sovereignty of home/nation, physical, concrete thresholds bespeak of desire and longing, and may become "the necessary obstacle that makes the bursting palpable" (Mukherji, 2013).

This panel includes papers on both actual, physical and figurative thresholds (and the way they interface with borders and boundaries, liminal states, frontiers), which cross several disciplinary fields, textual and visual genres, historical periods and perspectives that interrogate and capture the dynamics of thresholds, their creative potential, and their resonance in our contemporaneity.

Papers:

Session 1

Michael Fuchs - University of Graz

Off-Grid on The Grid: Between Virtual and Material Reality in *TRON: Legacy*

Richard Hardack - Independent Scholar

No Bo(a)rders Here: The Broken Threshold in Joy Williams' *Breaking and Entering*

Etta Madden - Missouri State University

Treacherous Thresholds in Samuel Delany's Speculative Fiction

Giacomo Traina - University of Rome "La Sapienza"

Walls, Voids and Masks in the "Cetological Center" of *Moby-Dick*

Session 2

Agnese De Marchi - Ca' Foscari University of Venice

Lower than (Confederate) Flag! The Wall of Division between North and South in Contemporary US Literature

Raffaella Malandrino - University of Catania - SDS of Foreign Languages and Literatures, Ragusa

"Shaking the pattern": Working through Liminal States in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper* and Susan Glaspell's *A Jury of her Peers*

Salvatore Proietti - University of Calabria

The Walls Themselves: Le Guin and Asimov between Critical Utopia and Environmental Sustainability

Sabrina Vellucci - Roma Tre University

Transcending the Narrative Boundaries of National Trauma: Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*

PANEL 18

Beyond Walls and Enclosures: Social Justice and Literary Experimentalism in Early Black Speculative Fiction

Panel Coordinators:

Nadia Nurhussein - Johns Hopkins University - nnurhus1@jhu.edu

M. Giulia Fabi - University of Ferrara - fbg@unife.it

This panel will explore the alternatives to exclusionary and discriminatory social practices and ideologies that emerge from African American literary works of speculative fiction published in the 19th and early 20th century. As a result both of the increasing popularity of Afrofuturism as a mode of critical inquiry and of the ongoing archival work of recovery and critical reinterpretation of previously neglected African American works of fiction, the variety of speculative challenges to the oppressive regimes of slavery and segregation can be investigated in ways that reveal the complex notions of social change informing the thematic concerns and formal experimentalism of African American speculative fiction from the 19th century to the Harlem Renaissance. The visionary, radical, prescient quality of these visions retains an insurgent and inspirational value highly relevant to 21st-century debates on social (in)justice, the "new Jim Crow," and contemporary forms of neo-colonialism within and beyond U.S. boundaries.

Papers:

Susan V. Donaldson - College of William and Mary Williamsburg

Charles W. Chesnutt's *The Conjure Woman* and the Possibilities/Failures of Transformation

Maria Giulia Fabi - University of Ferrara

Rethinking Early Black Speculative Fiction in the Era of the New Jim Crow

Nadia Nurhussein - Johns Hopkins University

Black Unconsciousness and Single-Mindedness: Harry Foster Dean's Dream of an African Empire

Ivy Wilson - Northwestern University

"Infatuated with the idea of home in Hayti ...": Black Transnationalism and the Allure of Empire

PANEL 19

Tearing Through the Fabric of Things: What Lies Outside, Beyond, Beneath the Page and the Screen

Panel Coordinators:

Marco Petrelli - University of Catania - SDS of Foreign Languages and Literatures, Ragusa - marco.petrelli@unict.it

Paolo Simonetti - University of Rome "La Sapienza" - paolo.simonetti@uniroma1.it

According to Mark Fisher, the **weird** (a sensation of *wrongness*, the conjoining of two or more things which do not belong together) and the **eerie** (concerning ontological questions such as: *why is there something here where there should be nothing? Why is there nothing here where there should be something?*) share "a fascination for **the outside**, for that which lies beyond standard perception, cognition and experience." Though the major examples of such modes traditionally come from horror and science fiction, when we consider the weird and the eerie as aesthetic categories emerging in a plethora of contemporary cultural artifacts, they can shed a new light on the way we approach, understand, and possibly overcome current dynamics linked to identity, historical and political barriers.

The weird and the eerie convey a feeling of otherness, create thresholds, passages between (im)possible worlds, and, most importantly, are connected to the possibility that something alien can break through the barriers that preserve our limited and well-guarded everyday perceptions and certainties. As modes of film and fiction, or even modes of perception, they often imply the presence of a ghostly agency whose origin is non-defined, leaving thus room for speculation about the ontological (or better, the *hauntological*) status of disturbances and intrusions that our intellectual frameworks fail to grasp. In making different worlds juxtapose, collide, and/or melt together, they are also strictly

connected to the invisible forces conjured by capitalist society, and inevitably elicit spatial inquiries in psychology, history and memory, language and identity, social structures and constructs, politics and ideology. This panel aims at investigating the disruption of frontiers between life and afterlife, the real and the imaginary, the continuum of past, present and future. Our papers will tackle the presence of ghosts, spirits, demons and unfathomable entities in contemporary novels, poetry, graphic novels, comics, film and tv-series.

Papers:

Session 1

Chiara Patrizi - Ca' Foscari University of Venice

Unhomely Languages and Experiences in Ted Chiang's *Story of Your Life* and Denis Villeneuve's *Arrival*

Marco Petrelli - University of Catania, SDS of Foreign Languages and Literatures, Ragusa

Ladies in Black, Ladies in White: History and Ghosts in Contemporary Southern Women Literature

Christopher Pizzino - University of Georgia

Life in the Upside-Down: Stranger Things and the Eternal 1980s

Session 2

Valerio Massimo de Angelis - University of Macerata

What Lies Beyond the (Yellow Wall)Paper?

Angelo Grossi - Ca' Foscari University of Venice

"Brooding avant-gardedly": Perturbation, 1940s Avant-garde Cinema, and *Infinite Jest*

Pilar Martínez Benedí - University of L'Aquila

You Don't Fear Zombies, You Fear Capitalism. An Ontology of the Plague in Colson Whitehead's *Zone One*

Paolo Simonetti - University of Rome "La Sapienza"

Writing Posthumously: Voices from the Afterlife in American Fiction

PANEL 20

Borders and Diversity

Panel Coordinator:

Matteo Pretelli - University of Naples, "L'Orientale" - matteopretelli75@gmail.com

From the 1840 onward, the US Southern borderline has been a major factor in the broad history of the United States. Indeed, at least by the time of the 1848 Guadalupe Hidalgo Treaty, not only it defined spatially US-Mexico diplomatic relations, but it also impacted the circular mobilities of Mexicans and Latin Americans to the United States and those of North Americans to Mexico, while simultaneously affecting the identity-building process of a wider border community. These mobilities associated to sizable flows of people, goods and ideas, have massively contributed to shaping reciprocal perceptions and reinforcing stereotypes among the larger border community.

Given its own deep permeability, the US Southern border may be looked historically as innately "flexible," and such a flexibility has implied a constant renegotiation of citizenship and identity that has mostly affected minorities groups like Native Americans, Hispanic and Anglo different-in-nature migrants.

The panel aims to analyze the Southern border as a key-area of the country in the long history of the United States, thus spanning from the beginning of the 19th century up to the rigid closure theorized today by President Donald J. Trump, in order to assess the historical role it played in the definition of such concepts as national security, foreign affairs, and racial relations.

Papers:

Session 1: Borders, Mobilities, Minorities

Marina De Chiara - University of Naples "L'Orientale"

Border Visions: Between Paranoia and Hope

Dario Fazzi - Roosevelt Institute for American Studies, The Netherlands

This Land is My Land, or Not? Native American Miners and the Second Uranium Boom

Marco Mariano - University of Turin

National, Imperial, Atlantic. The Many Scales of the Southwestern Border in ante-bellum America

Matteo Pretelli - University of Naples "L'Orientale"

A Wall for What? Mobilities and Communities Alongside The US-Mexico Border

Session 2: Bordering Race, Class, Culture

Alexander Bloom - Wheaton College, Massachusetts

"The Convergence": How Working-Class Economic Stagnation and America's Growing Diversity Combined to Elect Donald Trump and Transform the U.S. Political Landscape

Lee Hermann - Independent Scholar

The Democratic Party and Paramilitary Organization in Lafayette Parish, Louisiana in 1868 and 1869

Eralda L. Lameborshi - Stephen F. Austin State University

Against the Iron Curtain: The Non-Alignment Movement and Artistic Transgressions

Franco Tondi - University of Catania, SDS of Foreign Languages and Literatures, Ragusa

Language Shift and Assimilation Patterns of the Hispanic Ethnicity in the United States

PANEL 21

Gateways and Gatekeepers: American Institutions Abroad

Panel Coordinator:

Kathryn Roberts - University of Groningen - k.s.roberts@rug.nl

The institutional turn in literary studies (exemplified by the work of scholars like Lawrence Rainey, James English, and Mark McGurl) asks, without presuming to know the answer in advance, how the "machinery of cultural production" shapes the form and content of culture. In the same period, and from the institutional position of American Studies, revelations about C.I.A. funding for Cold War cultural programs have debunked the supposed autonomy and innocence of culture from the world of power politics. This panel seeks a dialogue between "describers" and "debunkers," ideology critique and post-critique, around institutions of American culture and power in Europe.

Magazines and military bases; academies and aide organizations; conventions and consulting firms: these and other institutions have, in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, been important sites for the dissemination of American culture/ideology/power. But they have also been generative of hybrid or "indigenized" cultural forms (to borrow a term from Arjun Appadurai) and unanticipated political mobilization. In line with the conference theme, we invite you to consider how these institutions serve as both gateways and gatekeepers: bridges to unexpected encounters; border-police of empire.

Papers:

Albertine Bloemendal - University of Leiden

Gateways and Gatekeepers: Memory Diplomacy and the U.S. War Cemetery in Margraten, the Netherlands during the War on Terror

Kathryn S. Roberts - University of Groningen

Art.org: On the U.S. Origins of European Artist Residencies

Michael J. Strauss - Centre d'Etudes Diplomatiques et Stratégiques (Paris)

How the United States Introduced Socialism to Cuba

PANEL 22

Walls and Breaches: Gender, Race and Class within American Society and Politics in the 19th and 20th century

Panel Coordinator:

Angela Santese - University of Bologna, angela.santese3@unibo.it

The United States has often been described as an open society characterized by a high level of social, political and economic mobility. Nonetheless, the evolution of the United States has been characterized by countless limes and borders, aimed not only towards the outside world but also towards some social groups that were part of the American social fabric itself. To understand how these dynamics of exclusion, or hierarchical inclusion, have always been at work in the American context, one just needs to read the founding document of the U.S. nation, the Declaration of Independence, that excluded women and slaves from the collective "we".

Starting from these considerations, the objective of this panel is to analyze, in an historical perspective, how class, gender and race, at different times in American history, acted and were used as barriers and boundaries to voluntarily or involuntarily exclude or marginalize portions of the American population from involvement in politics, union participation, access to the benefits of economic growth, social mobility.

Offering a range of perspectives across the chronological arc of the history of the country, the panel aims to investigate how and why gender, class and race were used to exclude and marginalize from different realms of the social and political life social groups that, at different times, were conceived of as possible corruptive actors for the body of the Nation: women, slaves, African-Americans, workers, immigrants, radical left activists, native Americans.

Papers:

Bruno Settis - Centre d'Histoire de Sciences Po, Paris

Whose Union? Race, Class, and Gender in the United Auto Workers in the Age of Reuther

Matteo Battistini - University of Bologna

The Lost Middle Class of Progressivism: Capital, Labor and Public Turmoil in Early Twentieth-Century America

Lorenzo Costaguta - University of Birmingham

For White Workers Only? Explaining Colorblind Socialism in the 'Age of Colorblindness'

Luis Ramos - New York University

Revolutionary Republicanism as Regeneration: Abolitionist Debates and Catholic Enlightenment Thought in Europe and the Americas

PANEL 23

From Island to Mainland: Defying Visible and Invisible Borders in Caribbean-American Literature and Visual Arts

Panel Coordinators:

Ada Savin - Versailles University, savinada7@gmail.com

Elèna Mortara - University of Rome "Tor Vergata", mortara@lettere.uniroma2.it

While crossing visible or invisible borders is by no means a novelty, the phenomenon has considerably gained in amplitude over the last decades. The geographical, political and linguistic displacement of Cubans, Dominicans or Haitians living in the US, has produced a significant body of literary and artistic works concerned with issues such as exile, return to the homeland, split/multiple identities, etc.

This panel intends to explore the effects of personal displacement on the textual and linguistic strategies of "unhoused" writers. Among many others, Junot Diaz, Cristina Garcia, or Edwidge Danticat call into question the very concept of "at-homeness", of their belonging to a territorialized national identity. The experience of *nostos* translates into images of nostalgia and in-betweenness. How are such notions as home, mother tongue, cultural and political belonging reshaped by the crossing of borders?

Many Caribbean as well as Mexican writers and artists are engaged in a circular movement - from South to North, and back - which by erasing walls, borders and boundaries, creates a metaphorical "glass border" (Carlos Fuentes).

Our papers will explore: exile and trauma; the self/selves in autobiographical texts, memoirs and essays; bridges to the homeland; visual representations of the island/homeland; creative innovations of diasporic communities; comparisons between the Caribbean and the Mexican-American experience of border crossing, land vs. water.

Papers:

Mónica Fernández Jiménez - Universidad Complutense de Madrid

Feminist Historiographies in the Diaspora: Domestic Subversion in Achy Obejas's Fiction

Elèna Mortara - University of Rome Tor Vergata

Identity Borders Within: Victor Séjour's Caribbean Antislavery Short Story "The Mulatto" (1837)

Ada Savin - University of Versailles

Dreaming in Cuban and *The Agüero Sisters*: Cristina Garcia's Fictional Geographies of the Caribbean

PANEL 24

The Politics of Walled Geographies/Communities in Contemporary US Cinema

Panel Coordinator:

Hilaria Loyo - University of Zaragoza, Spain - hloyo@unizar.es

The goal of this session is to facilitate a more inclusive understanding of the ways cinema mediates questions of physical and social space in the present context of economic liberalism, globalization, and electronic media. To this end, the participants will analyse how spaces are inscribed with meaning, how invisible borders are erected in contemporary

societies and the consequences this has for citizens. The rise of neoliberal globalization has generated concern and anxiety over questions of multiculturalism, national identity, and citizenship, which, in turn, has brought about an intensification of securitization measures and has mobilized a restrictive concept of citizenship that threatens fundamental human rights. Similarly, the 9/11 attacks and the financial crisis of 2008 have affected the way borders are perceived and the way we make sense of mobility and spatiality. Apart from their global dimension, these processes have also generated new geographical demarcations at home, creating areas of social privilege and exclusion that are redefining the social environment. All three panellists will examine how films create positions of knowledge from which to pursue questions about the entanglements of space, national security, inequality and citizenship. In his presentation, Dr. Ian Scott draws upon Hamid Naficy's elaboration on the notions of "house, home and homeland" and their interconnection with those of "personhood and exile" to examine how the documentaries about Julian Assange tap into broader questions about freedom. For her part, Dr. Hilaria Loyo also seeks to discuss questions of home and homeland vis-à-vis notions of citizenship and freedom by analyzing the invisible walls and geographies of exclusion in Debra Granik's films. Finally, Dr. Juan A. Tarancón examines how Latino films deal with the ethnic transformation of the landscape and mobilize different understandings of multiculturalism and citizenship in the wake of the recent crackdown on immigrants in the United States.

Papers:

Hilaria Loyo - University of Zaragoza, Spain

Rebuilding Homes as Sites of Resistance: Invisible Walls and Geographies of Exclusion in Debra Granik's Cinema

Ian Scott - Manchester University

A "Risk to his Freedom": At Home with Julian Assange

Juan A. Tarancón - University of Zaragoza

"Like a Corpse or Loose Seed": A Conjunctural Approach to Globalism, Citizenship and Latino Cinema in the United States

PANEL 25

"Cracks in the wall": The Circulation of People and Ideas during the Cold War

Panel Coordinator:

Luca Polese Remaggi - University di Salerno - lpoleseremaggi@unisa.it

This panel will present a set of researches connected by the intent of reversing the common interpretation of the Cold War as an era of barriers, walls and "closed systems", and highlighting how the circulation of people and ideas through the Iron Curtain and beyond played a fundamental role in shaping the history of the second half of the 20th century.

The expression "wall mentality" can be used to describe some aspects of life during the Cold War. An "under siege mental state" was used, for example, to prevent Soviet people from getting in touch with a more complex view of the world that could endanger the ideological framework sustaining the Soviet state, and to justify the birth of a "national security state" in the US. Over the years, this mentality extended to comprehend a whole world seemingly locked in the stalemate between the two superpowers. These enclosures, born with defensive and protective function, tried to cage the people inside a defined horizon, but they were not enough to suppress the possibility of dynamic exchanges.

In fact, a challenging and not-so-common approach to the history of the Cold War is to look not at what the Iron Curtain kept out, but at what, and who, was able to cross it. Efforts were made from the Western side to "cross the border" and penetrate Soviet territory both in a physical way – with the infiltration of agents – and in an intellectual one – with the use of propaganda and the circulation of "subversive" cultural items, while at the same time many people escaped the grip of the Soviet security state, generating ripples of change on both sides of the Wall. Even the boundaries of the Cold War were not so easily defined: the US experimented a vast array of policies to redefine the borders of their area of influence. Finally, this movement of men and ideas went beyond the "border" between the two superpowers. Global movements of people continued during the Cold War, creating specific contexts of multiculturalism linked to dynamic departures, arrivals and re-entries.

Papers:

Francesco Cacciatore - University of Salerno

Through the Curtain: Soviet Émigrés and Western Intelligence Collection in the Early Cold War

Luca Castagna - University of Salerno

Redefining the Boundaries of the West: The Kaleidoscopic US Goals between the 1950s and the 1960s

Raissa Pergola - University of Salerno

Crossing borders. Migration and multiculturalism in Southern America during the Cold War

Luca Polese Remaggi - University di Salerno

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