

## **Friday May 24**

10:45-12:15

### **A. Race/Ethnicity (1D 327)**

#### **From Revolution to Dilution: U.S. Ethnic Studies under Threat**

Elizabeth Fielder, University of Copenhagen, Denmark

#### **Indians traveling East**

Gunlög Fur, Linnaeus University, Sweden

During the 19th century a commercial interest grew in showcasing exotic and strange people and animals in European zoological gardens, markets and exhibitions. Among these strangers were American Indians who for various reasons traveled to Europe. Some of them also visited Sweden. The first to set foot in Sweden were three Pawnees who came in the 1870s. When one of them tragically died in Gothenburg, his body was sent to Karolinska Institutet for an autopsy. Over the following century many more American Indians visited Sweden. Indian athletes participated in the Stockholm Olympics, artists' works were displayed in exhibition halls, Iroquois politicians arrived on their own Indian passports, academics came to lecture, dancers entertained in the squares of small towns and some came to celebrate the memory of the Swedish colony along the Delaware River. This paper probes the contexts in which they traveled, the reasons that attracted Indian travelers to Sweden, the expectations they encountered and whether or not they influenced the representations of Indians in popular culture and scholarship.

#### **Election 2012 and the American Cultural Divide: Race, Religion, and Gender**

David Goldfield, University of North Carolina, USA

Pundits have depicted the 2012 U.S. Presidential election as one of stark choices for America's future. But cultural divisiveness and its impact on presidential elections are not recent phenomena. My paper explores the origins of the American cultural divide from the 1960s to the present, focusing on the transformation of race, religion, and gender. With the landmark civil rights legislation of 1960s, the Democratic Party lost its conservative component with the defection of southern whites to the Republicans. The "broad tent" of the two major political parties narrowed, with the Republicans shifting toward the right, and the Democrats moving toward the left. The ideological drift, however, has been uneven, with the Republican Party moving further away from the center than the Democrats. This is so not only because of race, but also because of religion and gender issues. Since the 1980s, immigration, economic changes, and internal migration have tilted the political balance back toward Democratic presidential candidates who have won the popular vote in five out of the past six presidential elections. The best markers for understanding the present and future of American presidential politics, however, remain voters' responses to issues of race, religion, and gender.

## **B. Postmodern Fiction and Television (1D 328)**

### **“It’s not a trick, Michael”:** Narrative Complexity and the Housing Bubble in *Arrested Development*

Julia Leyda, Sophia University, Japan

The television series *Arrested Development* (2003-2006) satirizes the corruption and greed of real estate developer George Bluth and his dysfunctional family after his arrest for fraudulent business practices. The show’s popularity continues, and the canceled series returns in 2013 through video-on-demand. But new episodes and distribution strategy are only the most recent ways in which *Arrested Development* breaks new ground.

*Arrested Development* was one of a vanguard of programs in the recent years that radically altered the conventions of American television. The show’s narrative complexity and seriality demanded more of audiences, as did the sophistication of the sarcastic humor, delivered without a laugh track, documentary-style complete with voiceover.

Yet the show’s theme—trickery—combines with its innovative style to portray the American family home within the context of the housing bubble. The fallen patriarch and his eldest son, a failed magician, both perform elaborate tricks; the father breaks the law in his business, while the son attempts to fool audiences with his magic. They rely on complexity and misdirection, while “good” son Michael tries to legitimize the family business. The complex narrative constructs the American family home as a shoddy material and emotional space, where morality is constantly under debate.

### **Representation of post-Socialism in American postmodern literature**

Ausra Paulauskiene, LCC International University, Lithuania

Imagining Europe through American eyes has a strong tradition in American literature, represented by Henry James and Ernest Hemingway among others, expatriates themselves, who compared their America to its West European roots. A smaller and less known body of American literature, represented by Abraham Cahan and others, sees Europe of their roots through the Americanized gaze of their doubly displaced characters, East European immigrants revisiting their part of Europe as American expatriates. While the New World remains monolithic in its constant change, the Old World has been split into the “right” kind of Europe and the “other” kind, to use Gary Shteyngart’s witty postmodern classification in *The Russian Debutante’s Handbook* (2002). Matthew Frye Jacobson has argued that this divide, when transported to the New World, “fractured the monolith” of the white race. How does Shteyngart’s contemporary novel continue or rewrite the narratives of the immigrant and the expatriate? How does the representation of post-socialism by Shteyngart, a Soviet Jewish immigrant himself, compare to that of Jonathan Franzen’s in *The Corrections* (2000)? Both novels were published around a decade after the fragmentation of the socialist bloc and both imagine the beginning of the disintegration of the artificially constructed Soviet “monolith” in the early 1990s.

### **Too Much Fun: Community and the Individual in David Foster Wallace's *Infinite Jest***

Julia Coursey, St. John's College, USA

“American experience seems to suggest that people are virtually unlimited in their need to give themselves away, on various levels. Some just prefer to do it in secret.” – David Foster Wallace

David Foster Wallace's postmodern masterpiece, *Infinite Jest*, boldly confronts questions that have been a part of the American experience as long as the country has existed. America is founded on individual liberties – the very things that are often given up in service of the state. In *Infinite Jest*, Wallace gives us Americans (or North Americans) from all walks of life - wildly different, but all struggling with the tension between individual and community, unsure of how to be in the world. Community plays an interesting role in this exploration of the personal. While some characters find themselves in serving their country, attending Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, or training with the tennis team, others recede into themselves, watching television and doing drugs. Often, those activities that seem to be internally focused produce a counter community (drug use and AA, for example), a community focused on shared values, or a community based on common loneliness. Personal struggles become enmeshed in national disputes, as the Entertainment, originally created to help a father bond with his son, becomes a weapon of mass destruction. How are we to take this multiplicity of approaches to the personal and communal? What does the understanding of the individual's relationship to community mean for America today? By following some of the currents of Wallace's thought, I hope to uncover a few of the answers.

### **“Bright Days for the Black Market”: Class and Other Warfares in Postmodern U.S. Fiction**

Richard Hardack, Independent Scholar

I explore why the black market, an economy predicated on wartime scarcity, has come to represent not an alternative economy, but a permanent fixture of a strain of post-war U.S. literature. I first assess Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow*, which is practically structured as a catalog of contraband, from its opening “black market marshmallows” to its litany of litany of weapons. But as a character sings in “Bright Days for the Black Market,” the war is only a distraction from the underlying, permanent black market: “The true war is a celebration of organic markets, carefully styled “black” by the professionals, [that] spring up everywhere.”

For Pynchon, the new-world economy was initially built on slavery—a market for actual black bodies. But the black market turns out not to be aberrant, but emblematic of the American psyche. As DeLillo echoes in *Underworld*, “fixing and hustling have come out of the shadows of black-market speculation to create an open economy of plunder and corruption.” As popular culture also becomes fascinated by shows such as *The Sopranos* and *Boardwalk Empire*, the lines between black-market war and peace-time economies, and occupations (military) and occupations (jobs), blurs. Here, I assess whether the black market has supplanted the marketplace in the context of the scandals of the last decade.

## **19th-Century Literature (1D 340)**

### **Poe and the New Order of Free Enterprise Capitalism**

Iulian Cananau, University of Gävle, Sweden

In her influential review of the “new formalist” movement, Marjorie Levinson grounds her discussion on the polemic of resurgent formalist views and theories with materialist approaches to literary history and interpretation represented by the well-established, institutionalized, school of new historicism. The most frequent problem invoked by representatives of the formalist “countercurrent” in literary studies today is the tendency of reducing literary texts to “a simple-minded mimesis” of their cultural and historical contexts, which has come to replace “the dynamic formalism that characterized early new historicism”. By recourse to Reinhart Koselleck’s notion of historical structure (which he discusses in connection with the practice of conceptual history), I propose an analysis of Poe’s narrative response to and representation of the new order of free enterprise capitalism, a period of huge transformations in antebellum America, brought forth by the rapid transition from an agrarian society to a market economy dominated by industrial capitalism. With this new historicist exercise informed by Koselleck’s philosophy of history, I hope to get a closer look at the elusive mechanisms of the dialectical relation between work and world, literature and history - a central issue for many of those writing against the new historicist “current”.

### **Dante in America: Charles Eliot Norton and the Suppression of Allegory**

Magnus Ullén, Karlstad University, Sweden

Despite the importance of typological interpretation to the Puritans, and despite counting as one of its founding figures a writer – Nathaniel Hawthorne – who openly declared himself a writer of “blasted allegories,” American literary criticism has rarely acknowledged the allegorical bent of American literature. Instead, from Poe onwards allegory has systematically been denigrated. In this paper, I discuss the paradoxical status of allegory and allegorical interpretation in the history of American literary criticism by looking at the establishment of the American Dante Society in 1881, and particularly the role played by its founder, Charles Eliot Norton, who was also the first professor of Fine Arts at Harvard. Proceeding from Norton’s comments on “the double or triple meaning that runs through” Dante’s great poem, I sketch the outlines of the hermeneutical system that established itself in America in the Gilded Age and which formed the basis of the academic study of literature in the United States, by contrasting it with the medieval fourfold system of interpretation that Dante explicitly invokes in his famous letter to Can Grande. On the basis of this comparison, I seek to explain why the denigration of allegory has remained a strong current in American literary criticism, despite the counter-current formed by such allegorically inclined theorists as Paul de Man and Fredric Jameson.

### **Fredrika Bremer and Margaret Fuller: A Current Encounter**

Anders Olsson, Mid Sweden University, Sweden

Actually, Fredrika Bremer and Margaret Fuller never met. When the Swedish writer Fredrika Bremer travelled in the United States and Cuba in the end of the 1840s, Margaret Fuller—U.S. critic, journalist, and writer—was in Rome, reporting about and participating in the Italian revolution and becoming marchioness Ossoli. The ship which took Margaret Fuller, her husband, and her son to the United States never reached shore, an event which took much of Bremer's attention. However, their biographies and trajectories intersect. They shared topics, were aware of each other's work and on corresponding terms, which is evident from their biographies, letters, reviews, and articles. They share chronology and ideas, but ironically both were abroad, on opposite sides of the Atlantic

It is the intersections of their trajectories and biographies, their awareness of each other, their common interests and references, the currents and undercurrents in the transatlantic resonances of the time, which this paper will investigate. Thus, it is about an encounter which never took place, an encounter which could have been, and perhaps, in view of their shared cosmopolitanism, also an unrealized "current encounter."

1:15-2:45

### **A. Currents and Countercurrents in Scandinavian-American Relations I (1D 327)**

#### **"The Fairest Among the So-called White Races:" Portrayals of Scandinavian Americans in the Filiopietistic Literature of the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries**

Jørn Brøndal, University of Southern Denmark

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a number of leading Scandinavian American academics, newspaper editors, Lutheran ministers, and amateur historians published works singing their praise to the Scandinavian immigrants and their American-born progeny. In those filiopietistic works, usually set within an Old World "national" rather than pan-Scandinavian framework, various assumptions about the Scandinavian Americans were made that seemingly meshed well with an emergent nativist US discourse on immigration and race. In my paper, I shall focus on one of the central "home-making myths" of the Scandinavian Americans, that of the Viking "discovery" of America in the year 1000, a myth propagated among others both by Norwegian-American Rasmus B. Anderson and by Swedish-American Johan A. Enander but also reverberating among Danish Americans. In grappling with this myth, I am particularly interested in identifying the message it conveyed to audiences in the United States. As it seems, the function of the myth was both to lay claim to charter-group status for the Scandinavian-American population group and to identify Scandinavian Americans more closely in a racial sense. By the 1920s, however, their claims to charter-group status and to special racial identification notwithstanding, Scandinavian Americans were discovering that the wages of their whiteness were being circumscribed in important ways.

### **“Our Viking Ancestors”: The Scandinavian ‘Discovery’ of America and US Literary History**

Christa Holm Vogelius, University of Michigan, USA

This paper investigates a pivotal moment in US immigration history and argues that shifts in the demographic profile of immigrants to the US during the last decades of the nineteenth-century inspired an interest in the connections between Scandinavian and US literatures and languages.

I will look in particular at American and Scandinavian efforts to claim a common ancestry through the ‘discovery’ of the Americas, a movement that embeds Nordic culture within the foundations of the American literary narrative. A number of prominent studies were published at the end of the nineteenth century examining the Viking inhabitation of the New World. Some, such as *America Not Discovered by Columbus* (1874), asserted that the Native Americans that Columbus first encountered may have spoken a pidgin of Nordic languages. Because Anglo-American writers exploited Native American history and language throughout the nineteenth century in the service of crafting a national foundation narrative, such assertions place Nordic culture within the earliest stages of American literary history. This placement both provides further background for the Anglo-American concept of “our Viking ancestors,” and complicates traditional understandings of the “dying Indian” trope in nineteenth-century American literature.

### **Inclusive Scandinavian Identity Themes in North America**

Gudrun Björk Gudsteins, University of Iceland

This paper is the first tentative step towards a study of the way that Scandinavian identity has been defined in North America. The first book to introduce and define the collective identity of Scandinavians who had settled in the US was brought out in 1893 and was called *History of the Scandinavians and Successful Scandinavians in the United States*. A wide group of contributors of Swedish, Norwegian, Danish and Icelandic background sought to give a comprehensive overview of the Indo-European background of Scandinavians and some of the prevailing characteristics of the Vikings, before introducing their history and accomplishments in the US.

My tentative hypothesis is that despite forceful arguments (outrageous at times!!!) stressing the superiority or exclusivity of Scandinavians that have obvious affinities with eugenics, *History of the Scandinavians and Successful Scandinavians in the United States* also evinces inclusive strategies that may perhaps be added to Orm Øverland’s list of American “homemaking” myths.

## **B. Native American Film and Fiction (1D 328)**

### **Countering Captivity in Popular Genres: The Only Good Indian and Older Than America**

Liz Kella, Södertörn University, Sweden

A Native presence can be found throughout US popular culture, from wild west shows to dime novels and western films. The role of Native Americans in Hollywood has been widely and justly

criticized, including how their roles as captive-takers have proliferated, but new work in native film studies and fiction counters this trend by, on the one hand, countering captivity narratives with scenes and tales of reverse captivity, and, on the other, by turning the focus to 'visual sovereignty' (Raheja) and agency in Indian filmmaking. This paper considers how Native-American centered film makes use of popular film genres, particularly the figures of vampire and ghost, to revise myths of captivity.

### **The “Own-Headed”, Changing One: Double-Voicedness in Mourning Dove’s *Cogewea***

Marianne Kongerslev, University of Southern Denmark

This paper explores Mourning Dove’s *Cogewea – The Half Blood* (1927) as a transitional and liminal novel drawing on both modern literary traits and traditional Native American storytelling. *Cogewea* embodies the liminal and the story of her romantic evolution functions as an allegory of women’s roles in the American society of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Reflecting a movement both within American mainstream society in regards to women and a changing discourse surrounding Native Americans, the novel portrays its heroine as an at once free-spirited, traditional and changing woman whose atypical personality and behavior baffles both the men who love her and her family. On the one hand, the novel draws in the western romance plot, and on the other, the heroine is a queer character who falls outside any easily recognizable category in a fashion that brings to mind the Two-Spirit gender category common to many Native societies. Written as a not wholly unproblematic collaboration between Mourning Dove and her editor Lucucllus V. McWhorter, even the novel’s conception and storytelling underscores a double-voicedness, becoming a form of two-spirit narrative.

### **Dances without Wolves: Time Magic in the Novels of Sherman Alexie, Louise Erdrich, and James Welch**

Tina Parke-Sutherland, Stephens College, USA

This presentation explores the ways three Native American novelists magically manipulate the past to explore the concerns of personal and tribal identity so central to contemporary Native American literatures. *Reservation Blues*, *The Antelope Wife*, and *Fools Crow* make rich and often startling use of the mythic/historic past to frame conversations about Indian-ness. Infamous Indian-killing generals, turned record company executives, time-travel from the nineteenth century to lure a Spokane rock band away from the Reservation. A talking dog tells dirty jokes as he rescues the Ojibwe girl-baby who ultimately tangles generations of two urban Indian families into a series of magical knots. A visionary young healer steps from his Blackfoot village into the mythic time/space of Feather Woman, the culture-bringer, who shows him how to lead his people through the unprecedented cultural disasters that await them. These and other techniques of magical realism help Alexie, Erdrich, and Welch tell stories of survival and hope, even in the context of profound loss.

### **C. Conservatism: An Enduring Countercurrent in American Politics? I (1D 340)**

#### **Conservative Hard Currency: Anti-Europeanism as Current and Countercurrent in Jefferson, Hoover, and Romney**

G.H. Joost Baarsen, TU Dortmund University, Germany

If not an enduring influence on American society itself, at the very least, anti-Europeanism is a persistent one within the conservative movement. With Thomas Jefferson, it became part of Euro-America's first political conversations and it has remained influential ever since. Jefferson's image of "Europe" served in creating an idealized and antipodal auto-identity. Anti-Europeanism became a force of change, a current in/of America's quest for liberty and freedom.

Although the identity aspect has stuck, throughout US history, visionary and less visionary change has been suggested to be "European." Herbert Hoover's adamant aversion to any "Europeanization" of America in the 1930s, and, more recently, Mitt Romney's rhetoric can be taken as examples here. From being a force of change, anti-Europeanism has become a deterrent against change (whether for the good or the worse).

This inherent paradox of anti-Europeanism in America – that it has signified action and reaction, current and counter-current – is this paper's subject. It attempts to briefly plot the evolution of anti-Europeanism in the US by means of an analytical comparison of the three conservatives' images of "Europe" and their concomitant fear of "Europeanization." It will argue that despite differences, anti-Europeanism has been one of the central currencies of the 'conservative movement' in America.

#### **From Birchers to Birthers – analyzing “the Radical Right” then and now**

Niels Bjerre-Poulsen, University of Southern Denmark

The 2008 election gave many Americans the hope that an Obama presidency could somehow change the tone of politics and move the political discourse beyond the fierce partisanship of the last decades. So far, the opposite seems to have happened. Any hope of a "post-ideological" era has been disrupted by a very visible display of outrage by "birthers" and "tea-baggers" and other groups even further to the right. This, in return, has once again led (mostly) liberals to discuss whether such forms of right wing opposition are a peril or merely a nuisance to democracy.

Several observers have noticed the striking similarities between the current "tea-party movement" and the "radical right" of the early 1960's, and now as then, some call out for moderate voices within the Republican Party that might help define the limits of "responsible conservatism." Accordingly, it might be illuminating to revisit the scholarly debate about right wing "extremism" which began in the 1950's, inspired by Theodore Adorno's work on "the authoritarian personality." Likewise, it is relevant to discuss some of the changes in American political culture,



and more specifically in the nature of the Republican Party, that might make it more difficult now than in the 1960's to reestablish the boundaries of a political mainstream.

### **“Goldwater, Ryan, and the dangerous honesty of the Republican Party”**

Alf Tomas Tønnessen, Volda University College, Norway

Vice-presidential candidate Paul Ryan has been referred to as the Barry Goldwater of the 21st century. Like Goldwater, he spells out policy changes that a majority of Americans are critical of. First, this paper will compare the ideas of Goldwater and Ryan, explaining how both of them have advocated decentralization of power. Goldwater suggested changing Social Security by making it optional over time. Similarly, Ryan took initiative to the idea of partial privatization of Social Security, which President George W. Bush then advocated in early 2005. Ryan has also proposed a voucher system in Medicare. Goldwater and Ryan have both been influential in the evolving views of the GOP even though their ideas were originally met with suspicion by the leadership of the party.

This paper will argue that when Republicans propose specific changes to the pillars of the Democratic Party's main reforms: Social Security and Medicare, the party alienates moderates and fuels the base of the Democratic Party. Goldwater's ideas were regarded as outside the American mainstream, and Ryan struggles to convince voters about his own proposals.

## **Saturday May 25**

10:45-12:15

### **A. Currents and Countercurrents in Scandinavian-American Relations II (1D 327)**

#### **The “Viking” Origins of Left Coast Politics: Scandinavians and San Francisco Labor, 1890-1934**

Dr. Christopher M. Sterba, Universitetet i Bergen, Norway/ San Francisco State University, USA

Though their presence in San Francisco was small, Scandinavian immigrants played a critical role in the city's labor movement at the turn of the twentieth century. Andrew Furuseh and Olaf Tveitmoe, two of the city's most important union leaders, were Norwegians who wielded great local and even international influence. Their approaches to activism and social legislation left a lasting imprint on the unique political culture of San Francisco.

Both Furuseh and Tveitmoe maintained their Scandinavian cultural identities as much as possible, though they visited Norway only later in their lives. They continued to read extensively in Scandinavian history and literature; belonged to San Francisco's Norwegian fraternal organizations; and followed the politics of their homeland with partisan interest.

Their social and political agenda in the United States, meanwhile, grounded in cultural tradition and pursued with an aggressive activism, set them apart from the mainstream of American labor. Their careers also reflect the San Francisco style of politics captured in the phrase "Left Coast City." This paper is part of a larger work on San Francisco and the immigrants from maritime regions – most notably China, Italy, the Philippines, and Scandinavia – who helped shape the city's progressive political life long before the 1960s.

### **Drawing the Color Line – the making of whiteness in a Swedish-American newspaper in the early 1880s**

Jens Björk Andersson, Linnaeus University, Sweden

My presentation will focus on how ethnicity and race are depicted in the Jamestown based newspaper *Folkets Röst* 1883-1884. My theoretical point of departure is Whiteness and this presentation is a part of my doctoral thesis where I am investigating the Swedish Americans and their way(s) to whiteness. The call to examine whiteness first came from Toni Morrison in her *Playing in the Dark*. Morrison suggests that the centrality of defining whiteness is the inescapability of black representation to the construct of white identity. My presentation aim to visualize this whiteness and my main focuses will be on the way African Americans are described and how other European ethnicities are ascribed “non-white” attributes, all in order to connect to a contemporary “white” American discourse.

### **Norwegian Royal Visits to the Twin Cities in War and Peace, 1925-1975**

David C. Mauk, University of Oslo, Norway

This paper explores the significance of visits by the members of Norway’s royal family to Minneapolis-St. Paul. Its aim is to show how they helped construct a transnational civic identity and ethnicity between the homeland and the “emigrated Norway” in the United States. Potential for such visits came within contexts of celebration at jubilees in time of peace, as signs of increasing recognition of Norwegian-America's importance for ancestral and cultural ties, and as mutual assistance within a "greater Norway" in time of war. Members of the Norwegian royal family did not, however, represent the homeland at the great celebrations in Minneapolis-St. Paul that marked the centennial of Norway’s constitution in 1914 and of immigration to the United States in 1925, when leaders of its state church and parliament traveled to the Twin Cities. Rather those first high-level state visits paved the way for a pattern of growing acknowledgement that led to royal visits in 1939, 1942, 1964 and 1975. These "princely" contacts, in the context of the meanings they held for different elements in the Twin Cities' Norwegian American communities, offer focal points for examining the shifting content of ties between the homeland and the cultural capital of Norwegian America.

## **B. Literary genres (1D 328)**

### **“Why Can’t You All be Like Perry Mason?”: Black Panther Autobiography Meets Crime Fiction**

Chloé Avril, University of Gothenburg, Sweden

In this paper I aim to explore the theme of the conference, Currents/Countercurrents from the point of view of a meeting between literary genre and political activism. In her study of feminist adaptations of generic fiction, *Feminist Fiction* (1990), Anne Cranny-Francis argues that crime fiction is perhaps the genre that most resists progressive attempts at ideological transformation. It may thus seem surprising that several of the autobiographies written by members of the Black Panther Party borrow from this literary tradition of crime fiction, weaving such aspects as the courtroom drama, hard-boiled dialogue, scenes of escape and pursuit etc. into their narrative. Looking at texts by Huey P. Newton, Angela Davis, Assata Shakur and Elaine Brown, I will investigate whether their use of elements of crime fiction in any way works against the politics of these narratives or whether the narratives in fact succeed in re-inventing the crime genre in order to fit their overriding political purpose.

### **The Metaphysical Thriller: A Literary Genre?**

Antoine Dechêne, University of Liège/CIPA/Belspo, Belgium

The metaphysical thriller is largely considered as a 20th century phenomenon whose heydays coincide with the last quarter century and is generally associated with the development of experimental postmodern fiction. In this paper, I would like to examine the metaphysical thriller as a relatively underestimated “countercurrent” in the history of American literature, from Edgar Allan Poe to Paul Auster and beyond, one which highlights important challenges and considerations which clearly lie beyond the traditional reaches of the detective novel.

Despite the paucity of secondary sources on the metaphysical thriller, Patricia Merivale’s and Susan Elizabeth Sweeney’s *Detecting Texts: The Metaphysical Detective Story from Poe to Postmodernism* (1999), provides a fundamental groundwork towards a definition of the genre, emphasizing the elements of parody and/or subversion of the basic conventions of “the traditional detective-story” - a notion which is itself problematic given the richness and variety of the history of the genre since the mid-19th century. My talk will discuss some of Poe’s stories which will allow me to discuss the metaphysical detective story less as a “current” or “countercurrent” of the detective novel disrupting the formulaic narrative patterns of an established genre, but also as a form whose emergence coincides with the “foundational moments” of the development of detective fiction.

### **Making Home, Building Kinship: Contemporary Orphan Stories**

Helena Wahlström, Uppsala University, Sweden

Orphans abound in American literature; in the classics, in formula fiction and comic books, as well as in contemporary novels. In a national context where the links between – even the joint destinies of – family and nation are continually stressed, the prevalence of the orphan child raises questions about its signifying capabilities. The ways that orphan children figure in late 20th and early 21st century texts at times re-inscribes, at other times re-invents generic and gendered literary conventions, and it also opens questions about the limits of a national literature as shared cultural memory. Drawing upon kinship theory, childhood studies, and literary studies, this paper presents the findings of a collaborative study of novels about African American, white Euro-American, and Native American orphans that situates these fictional children in relation to both social histories and literary history, especially the history of literary genres (Maria Holmgren Troy, Liz Kella, Helena Wahlström). Addressing the place of the orphan boy in two so-called 9/11 novels, *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* by Jonathan Safran Foer (2005), and *Specimen Days* by Michael Cunningham (2005), the paper discusses the ways that certain genres and literary traditions become sites for exploring a notion of processual kinship.

### **C. Empire and the Notion of Progress (1D 340)**

#### **American Politics and the Jeffersonian Notion of Progress**

Ari Helo, University of Oulu, Finland

In his first Inaugural Address in 2009 President Barack Obama talked of "the quiet force of progress throughout our history" as a combination of "hard work and honesty, courage and fair play, tolerance and curiosity, loyalty and patriotism." As to what was in need here and now, he added: "What is demanded is a return to these truths." Progress that calls for a return is hardly progress in the sense of any genuine novelty entering the stage of history. Calling for a general revival of values seems more like seeing a rotary motion at work in time—in essence, holding to a cyclical view of history. To be sure, Obama is famous for his slogan that "We need to look forward as oppose to looking backwards." But this apparently traditional American preference for being forward-looking would easily confuse the concept of politics with somehow intrinsically progressive view of all history. In order to make the distinction, this paper discusses the distinctions between politics, progress, and history as Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) grasped the concepts at the turn of the nineteenth century.

#### **Infertile America: (Counter)currents of Nationalist-Natalist Rhetoric**

Abby Goode, Rice University, USA

This paper examines the rhetorical role of infertility in U.S. presidential speeches that address demographic concerns and population fertility. It departs from the notion of reproductive narrative—the cause-effect pattern that leads to a product, often a child—to propose that *narrative infertility* functions as the threat that drives and structures this pattern in presidential speeches. Within this narrative logic, such a threat ultimately enables “American” population fertility to heroically emerge as the exceptional conclusion to these national stories.

This paper, then, tracks narrative infertility as an essential countercurrent in American nationalist-natalist rhetoric, from Jeffersonian agrarianism to Roosevelt's "race suicide" panic. First, I read Thomas Jefferson's 1801 inaugural speech as it stages the nation as an empty, wild, and potentially barren space that must be populated and filled with "our descendants" against all odds. I then examine Andrew Jackson's 1830 state of the union address, wherein he puts forth a fertile soil-settler model of the developing nation, which emerges from the image of a sterile, underdeveloped terrain. Using these models, I read Theodore Roosevelt's "Race Suicide" speech (1903) as an extension of this early expansionist rhetoric. In so doing, I track a rhetorical genealogy from early reproductive imperatives to eugenicist claims for demographic control and shift questions of reproduction from the nuclear family to the always-potentially-infertile population.

### **Empire's Legacies: Protestant America and the Hemisphere's Catholic Past in Irving's *Columbus*, Prescott's *Mexico*, and McGee's *Catholic History***

AnaMaria Seglie, Rice University, USA

Literary studies of U.S. imperialism tend to study religion as a facet of race, class, and gender. This paper, however, highlights the centrality of religion within the history of U.S. Empire and traces one strand of imperialism through Washington Irving's and William Prescott's romantic histories of Catholic Spanish Empire. Showing how Irving's 1828 *The Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus* and Prescott's 1843 *History of the Conquest of Mexico* employ the Western Hemisphere's Catholic past to stage the ascension of Protestant America, I argue that these texts cultivate a Protestant imperial imaginary.

Scholars tend to see anti-Catholic imperialism as a series of isolated incidents rather than a long-standing imperialist discourse inculcated within U.S. Romanticism. In so doing, they elide the religious logics that link Irving's and Prescott's works and, in so doing, obscure texts that attempt to resist this tradition. Reading *Columbus* and *Mexico* alongside little-known Thomas D'Arcy McGee's 1855 *The Catholic History of North America*, I illustrate how the history of Catholicism haunts Irving's and Prescott's romantic histories. By analyzing how Irving and Prescott both bury and demonize the Catholic history that McGee foregrounds, we see how *Columbus* and *Mexico* expose a Protestant imperial ideology.

### **Twilight of the Trans-Atlantic Empire**

Mekonnen Tesfahuney, Karlstad University, Sweden

The Trans-Atlantic region has been the planetary (geo)political, economic intellectual and cultural center over the past five centuries. The Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, British, and US Empires in succession – it all has been a Western affair.

The Trans-Atlantic Empire is on the decline. History teaches us that major global financial crises presage empire shifts (Arrighi 1994; Harvey 2005). The crisis is not just financial or economic,

rather systemic (political and cultural). “Things are falling apart, and the center cannot hold” as Yeats so memorably put it.

The Empire is trying to secure its position as the prime mover of world affairs, by violent means. Its numerous covert and overt wars, let loose “anarchy and the blood-dimmed tide,” signal the twilight of the Trans-Atlantic Empire. “It is the desperate moment when we discover that this empire, which had seemed to us the sum of all wonders, is an endless, formless ruin, that corruptions gangrene has spread too far to be healed by our scepter” to speak with Calvino.

“What rough beast, its hour come around at last” is slouching to be born? We are at the dawn of what I call the longitudinal world order. The latitudinal Trans-Atlantic, “white” planetary order, is slowly but definitely being supplanted by the South-South “non-white” planetary order. The current proto-fascist moment that is afflicting Empire is a manifestation of the same.

## **D. Music (1D 341)**

### **Traditionalism, Modernism, and the Construction of Jazz History**

Mario Dunkel, TU Dortmund University, Germany

The predominant strand of 1930s jazz historiography in the United States, from the very beginning, was marked by traditionalism and strong impulses of nostalgia. From Wilder Hobson’s 1939 *Jazz: An American Music* and Charles E. Smith and Frederic Ramsey, Jr.’s 1939 *Jazzmen* to Rudi Blesh’s 1946 *Shining Trumpets*, the authors of early American monographs on the history of jazz were largely anti-swing reactionaries who sought to bring about a revival of “hot jazz” – a type of music that had been quite popular before the Great Depression and was replaced by the new music of swing during the so-called swing craze.

This paper argues that we can understand early jazz historiography as a struggle between two currents: modernism and counter-modernism. Counter-modernist jazz historiography, rather than being an attempt to narrate the history of jazz neutrally, functioned as a textual tool to foster a musical return to America’s ostensible sonic past – a lost world that seemed to resound in the hot jazz of the 1920s. By contrast, such modernist jazz historians as Barry Ulanov and Leonard Feather constructed narratives that viewed jazz as the acme of high modernist art. Finally, my paper will demonstrate how these two currents were embedded in and responded to such larger socio-cultural movements as the American “cultural front” (Denning).

### **From ‘Ack Värmeland du sköna’ to ‘Dear Old Stockholm’: the successful Swedish-American co-operation in jazz**

Mischa van Kan, University of Gothenburg, Sweden

In 1951 the American jazz musician Stan Getz visited Sweden and recorded a jazz version of the folk song ‘Ack Värmeland du sköna’ together with Swedish musicians. The tune was received with great enthusiasm in Sweden and coincided with the general acceptance of a ‘Swedish’ form

of jazz. It was regarded as authentic jazz as well as faithful to Swedish music history. What was the recipe for this successful mix of Swedish and American music culture?

This paper discusses the Swedish reception of ‘Ack Värmeland du sköna’ with special attention for issues of race and ethnicity, with the use of Ronald Radano’s concept of Racial Imagination, the distinction of groups and people based on notions of race. By examining the discourse and the music itself, in a way understandable for musicologists as well as academics from a different background, this paper will examine how American jazz was successfully integrated with a Swedish music history.

Central questions in this presentation are: What demands were there for the interpretation of a Swedish folk song in a jazz context? How were these related to issues of race and ethnicity? How were these conceptions translated into music?

### **Cultivating ‘a serious and living relationship with music’: Theodor Adorno’s WNYC radio project**

Cristina Ruotolo, San Francisco State University, USA

My paper focuses on Theodor Adorno’s scripts for a WNYC radio program he delivered that aimed to teach average Americans how to recognize and think about musical form—from Mozart and Bach to commercial hits. I situate these and his other writings about music produced during his initial years of exile in New York in relation to various pedagogical practices of the larger network of avant-garde émigré musicians who strove to communicate their musical values to American audiences and students. My aim is twofold: to rethink the ways in which we approach Adorno’s American writings (in relation to his own musical career, and the network of musicians in which he worked); and to consider the stakes of different forms of musical literacy as articulated by this group of émigré musicians. Adorno’s antipathy to commercial popular music, which in 1940 he indiscriminately labeled “jazz,” should be understood, I argue, in terms of his conviction, shared by fellow émigré musicians, that the capacity to understand and experience musical form is a powerful battleground for the possibility of human freedom under both fascism and commodity capitalism.

1:15-2:45

### **A. Currents and Countercurrents in Scandinavian-American Relations III (1D 327)**

#### **Far Darker than the Ikea Paradise of Sensible Volvos: American Perceptions of Sweden Filtered Through Crime Fiction**

Ulf Jonas Björk, Indiana University-Indianapolis, USA

For the past decade, the extraordinary popularity of Scandinavian crime fiction in America has generated increased curiosity about Sweden among Americans, and the purpose of this study is to

examine references to Sweden in discussions of Swedish crime fiction in U.S. media. A basic theme in the U.S. media discussions is that of contrast between the image of a supposedly idyllic and tranquil society and the gloom and darkness of the novels. Many comments almost gleefully hint at serious problems beneath the idyllic surface, at the crumbling façade of a country long held up as a model. Populating many discussions of Larsson's and Mankell's works are pop-culture icons that many Americans seem to associate present-day Sweden with, such as ABBA, IKEA, and Volvo. Bringing up one or more of these often serves as a writer's device to drive home the theme of contrast: ABBA songs are upbeat, Volvos are safe, and IKEA furniture is practical, all very different from the darkness of crime novels.

### **Translations of US literature: patterns of transmission in the Swedish field, 1990-2005**

Bo G Ekelund, Stockholm University, Sweden

In this paper I will present intermediary results from a quantitative and qualitative study of the Swedish field of translation, with a special focus on the translations of US literature. My study maps all the translations from the major modern languages into Swedish in the period 1990-2005, including a total of over 27,000 translations (only counting first editions) translated by 4642 individual translators, the majority of them translating from English (3619). The paper will present some of the overall patterns and then focus on the particular case of US literature. Particular emphasis will be given to "prestige translations", that is, literary translations by the translators with especially great volumes of field-specific capital. The prestige translators are often active as critics as well, and from my work on the field of critics I will make a case for the particular role of "introduktör" that is such a key element in the transmission of core literary works into a peripheral literary field.

### **The Changing Role of Ethnicity in Swedish-American Relations During the 20th Century**

Dag Blanck, Uppsala University, Sweden

As a part of an ongoing book project on a book on the social and cultural relationships between Sweden and the United States over the past two centuries, this paper will focus on the role ethnicity and the Swedish mass migration to the U.S. have played for the overall relationship between the two countries in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Up until World War II ethnicity had been a major aspect of Swedish-American relations. The existence of a Swedish-American community formed a natural starting point for discussions of the relations between the two countries in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and has continued to be of significance until the present time.

Beginning in the mid 1930s, however, ethnicity has become supplemented with, and at times overshadowed by other factors, many which were associated with the growth of Swedish modernity, often linked with what is sometime referred to as the Swedish welfare state. The paper will thus deal with this process and suggest the development of multiple social and cultural relationships between Sweden and the U.S. and examine the reasons for and interests behind them on both sides of the Atlantic.



## **B. Literature and (Im)migration (1D 328)**

### **“And we knew it would only be a matter of time until all traces of us were gone”: Julie Otsuka and Japanese American incarceration during World War II**

Lena Ahlin, Kristianstad University, Sweden

In her two novels *When the Emperor Was Divine* (2002) and *The Buddha in the Attic* (2011), Julie Otsuka explores the experiences of Japanese immigrants in the US before, during and after World War II. In this paper, her works are considered as narratives of cultural remembrance employing certain motifs that articulate the Japanese American experience of forced removal and incarceration during the war. The paper argues that the tropes of disintegration, guilt and imprisonment are critical to Otsuka's representation of the forced removal and that they are most significantly mediated through gender and narrative perspective. The collective point of view, used partly in *When the Emperor was Divine* and throughout *The Buddha in the Attic*, resonates with Otsuka's conception of the Japanese as a “communal people” allowing her to “tell everyone's story.” These notions form part of an examination of how the collective voice underscores the themes of collective remembrance and social critique.

Finally, Otsuka's texts are regarded as memory work revolving around the tension between remembrance and forgetting. Silence and forgetting are significant aspects of the practices of remembrance of the incarceration during World War II, suggesting the simultaneous resilience and vulnerability of the Japanese Americans.

### **The West in Asia/Asia in the West: Ha Jin's *Nanjing Requiem* (2012)**

Clara Juncker, University of Southern Denmark

The title of this project suggests the importance of place in Asian/Western writings. It also evokes the topographical turn in literary and cultural studies emphasizing space and place. In Chinese American literature, place operates in complicated and productive ways, as in the works of Ha Jin (Xuěfēi Jin), who situates his writings in China, in the US, or in symbolic, ideological and geographical landscapes that suggest both Asia and the West simultaneously. In *The Crazy* (2002), which takes place during the Tiananmen Square uprisings of 1989, he activates the political and historical sites and events that caused him to leave China behind and settle permanently in the US. At the same time, provincial China interacts with America as an imagined community, the site of academic degrees and success, escape from Chinese restrictions, hypocrisy, and family obligations. It interacts as well with Beijing as a place of rebellion, terror, and power. In his most recent novel, *Nanjing Requiem* (2011), Jin stresses place in recounting the atrocities committed by the Japanese Central Expeditionary Forces commanded by General Matsui in 1937. His writings situate both China and the US as a “foreign place,” where fictional and historical figures turn foreign, fluid, and destabilized.

### **Ganz Ganavish: Gary Shteyngart in the Tradition of Jewish-American Immigrant Literature**

Roy Goldblatt, University of Eastern Finland

Born in 1972, Gary Shteyngart emigrated from Leningrad in 1979 and has published three novels since 2002. Early criticism of his work, like that of other recent Russian-Jewish-American immigrant writers, has often focused on the differences between it and earlier Jewish immigrant works. This paper will draw parallels between the writing in that first blooming of Jewish immigrant fiction and that of Shteyngart. While it is of course true that the recent generation is Jewish chiefly by Soviet decree, and highly educated in contrast to the generation of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Shteyngart's fiction has clear parallels to the work of Samuel Ornitz and Daniel Fuchs. His educated protagonists cast aside the "kosher"—honest methods such as education and business with an eye to becoming a teacher or other professional—of the past and adapt their talents to openly "ganavish"—dishonest or immoral pursuits such as running a Ponzi scheme for the Russian mafia, covering up the bankruptcy of a post-Soviet Caucasian republic and selling "indefinite life extension". Moreover, each of the novels ends in a cataclysm, something more than just echoing the ending of a Fuchs story, where everything turns to dreck, or garbage.

### **C. American Evangelicalism across the Atlantic in the 1950s and 1960s (1D 340)**

This panel will explore the many ways that American evangelicals reacted to and engaged with pop culture, family identity, and consumerism in the 1950s and 1960s. The three contributions will shed light on how some of the most conservative Christians in America presented their faith on a world stage and responded to the changing western world.

#### **"Daddy, where've you been?" Billy Graham as Family Man and World Evangelist**

Hilde Løvdal, University of Oslo, Norway

Graham, Løvdal will demonstrate, established himself as a world evangelist while his wife and children waited for him at home. He could spend 11 out of 12 months of the year on the road saving the souls of strangers across the world. All the while, he sold himself as a family man. This paper will examine tension between his family obligations and his call to preach the gospel. The paper points forward to the 1970s as well, when evangelicals started to market themselves as pro-family and called for husbands to sacrifice their careers in the interest of their family.

#### **"Stamp out the Beatles!" The Evangelical and Fundamentalist Response to the Bigger-than-Jesus Controversy**

Randall Stephens, Northumbria University, U.K.

In "'Stamp out the Beatles!': The Evangelical and Fundamentalist Response to the Bigger-than-Jesus Controversy" Randall Stephens will describe the intense evangelical reaction to John Lennon's famous mid-1960s remark that the Beatles had become "more popular than Jesus" with England's youth. The anti-Beatle campaigns in America, and especially the South, that followed

reveal conservative Christian fears of pop culture and a growing anxiety about American young people, and the presumed horrid influence musicians had over them. The 1966 controversy, Stephens will demonstrate, marked a new era in evangelical-cultural engagement.

**Selling Soap and Salvation: Billy Graham's Consumer Rhetoric in Germany and the United States in the 1950s**

Uta Balbier, King's College, U.K.

The paper will demonstrate that Graham modeled not just a religious, but also an American middle-class lifestyle for his German audiences. The interaction between American and German religiosity during Graham's revival meetings in Germany shows how processes of Americanization and global consumerism bridged the Atlantic divide in the field of religion leading to the development of a Western evangelical identity.

**D. 9/11, Memory, and Trauma (1D 341)**

**"A common field one day, a field of honor forever": Remembering Flight 93**

Stephanie Aziz, University of Southern Denmark

Since September 11, 2001, several studies have shown an increase in Americans' sense of patriotism. Through an analysis of the commemoration, both immediate and long-term, of the Flight 93 crash in Shanksville, Pennsylvania on 9/11, this presentation discusses how such contemporary cultural traumas and the memorials that they foster in the United States are defined by expressions of patriotism and unity. Moreover, focus will be on how collectively remembering may strengthen unity and a strong, patriotic American national identity.

The presentation will focus on research carried out at the Flight 93 National Memorial, and includes interviews with on-site staff, as well as notes, pictures and other items left by visitors over a 10-year period. Furthermore, the permanent memorial at the site will be discussed, as it serves to illustrate how heroism and patriotism are essential features in the memorialization of the Flight 93 passengers and crew.

The presentation's theoretical framework is based on scholars such as Jeffrey C. Alexander, Erika Doss, John R. Gillis, and Edward T. Linenthal.

**American Identity and the Folklore of Crisis: Millennial Generation Narratives of Trauma and Survival After 9/11**

John F. Moe, The Ohio State University, USA

In many ways, the aftermath of 9/11 reveals how the impact of the event on individual lives transcended far beyond U.S. boundaries. More than thirty novels and memoirs were published after 9/11, many transnational novels that illustrate the extent of diversity in the World Trade Center. This paper examines the contemporary personal narratives, from young people who have

grown up with the stories that explain and exploit the events of 9/11. The writer Dinaw Mengestu remarked in his novel *How to Read the Air* (2012) that people living in America at the time of the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center feel compelled to be able to place themselves on the day of the event. Believing that 9/11 was the pivotal or signal event of that time, many argue that people naturally contemplate their position related to the tragedy that followed and their individual feelings concerning survivorship.

**American Undercurrents in the 21st Century: Trauma, Survival, and the Role of the Witness in Nicole Krauss's *Man Walks Into a Room***

Laura Castor, University of Tromsø, Norway

Nicole Krauss's exploration of Samson Greene's consciousness in *Man Walks Into a Room* (2002) poses questions that transcend the political polarizations of our time. Rather than offering liberal hope or a conservative return to tradition, Krauss compels readers to respond empathetically to voices in a contemporary America characterized by undercurrents of vulnerability and exposure. After Greene survives a brain tumor, he volunteers as a subject for neurological experiments on memory transfer. Unwittingly, he becomes the recipient of the traumatic memory of another test subject who survived a 1957 atomic test explosion in the Nevada desert.

Krauss's focalization through Samson's post-operation empty consciousness explores psychological tensions between trauma survivors and witnesses: the listener may begin as an idealist, as does Samson the volunteer. Samson changes his mind after he experiences, viscerally, the memory of the atomic test. Similarly, the recipient of a trauma survivor's testimony may land in the position of hearing stories that find no place in the listener's vision of America, or humanity.

Samson and the reader represent both the trauma survivor and listening witness. Krauss's narration thus urges readers to explore tensions between individual freedom and loneliness, and between American progressive ideals and more fragile, post-9/11 global identities.

4:15-5:45

**A. Utopia and Post-Apocalypse (1D 327)**

**Utopia in James Patrick Kelly's *Burn* and in Second Life's Midian City and Neufreistadt**

Maria Bäcke, Karlstad University, Sweden

Drawing on Henry David Thoreau's theories of utopia I intend to explore how contemporary ideas of utopia are represented in one novel, *Burn* by James Patrick Kelly, and in two interactive media environments, Midian City and Neufreistadt, a role-play community and a democracy experiment, in the online 3D world Second Life.

James Patrick Kelly's *Burn* is a science fiction novel building on Thoreau's ideas of a more natural environment. The planet, significantly called Walden, is inhabited by Thoreau-influenced colonisers and a repressed minority group, the technology-friendly pukpuks, and the reader follows the struggle for less antagonism. A similar struggle can be found in *Second Life*, where owners of role-play communities invite role-players to share their vision, which has brought about animated discussions and even a revolution resulting in a usually impossible forced exit of the founders.

Against the background of the individualistic tendency prevalent in western societies today, I would argue that literature and online 3D environments — since the creators of both have greater freedom to alter visions in regard to what is conventionally called reality — highlight the utopian quality and subsequently also point in the direction in which society might be heading.

### **“The Spectacle of a Lost Future”: Rick Moody’s Suburban Apocalypse**

Anna Hellén, University of Borås, Sweden

By the 1950s suburbia had become the most common form of housing in the United States and was built up as the perfection of American spatial evolution. Needless to say, this image has been fervently contested in films and novels over the decades, not least in various catastrophic scenarios. As I will demonstrate in this paper, Rick Moody's *The Ice Storm* (1994) and *Purple America* (1998) relate the symbolic demise of suburbia to a greater cosmic scheme. The two novels, more precisely, concur with two different currents in the American apocalyptic tradition: *The Ice Storm* presents a suburban landscape rushing towards catastrophe accompanied by escalating conflicts and portentous signs and is essentially premillennial in its apocalyptic outlook. In post-apocalyptic *Purple America*, by contrast, the catastrophe has already occurred, the conflicts have ceased, and change equals slow but steady deterioration. As I will also show, Moody's novels examine the close affiliations between apocalyptic mythology and the teleological underpinnings of American culture at the same time as they demonstrate that the apocalyptic plot is still viable as a means of exploring social and existential crisis.

### **“There’s Still Time, Brother” – Narratives of Doom from *On The Beach* to *Sixty Days and Counting***

Robert Mikkelsen, Østfold University College, Norway

Warnings of the future apocalypse quickly become reflections of the past in the sliding scale of perspectives made available through Science Fiction. A brief study of a few examples will make it clear that the future isn't what it used to be – and never was.

## **B. Visuality (1D 328)**

### **The Other Vietnam Syndrome: Visuality, Corporeal Patriotism, and US Military Dissent and Resistance in Iraq**

David Jansson, Uppsala University, Sweden

We argue that an important “regime of visuality” was given birth in reaction to the countercultural movements of the 1960s and their articulation in the efforts to end the Vietnam War. This regime of visuality associates antiwar activism with a particular kind of visual expression, and this visual coding we consider to be the “other” Vietnam syndrome. This syndrome represents an attempt to delegitimize antiwar activism and brand it as deviant through visual references to the Vietnam era, and it demands a kind of corporeal patriotism in which U.S. citizens must not only behave patriotically but also “look patriotic.” By reviewing the contemporary examples of the Appeal for Redress and the refusal of Ehren Watada to serve in Iraq, we show how this regime of visuality is relevant even for today’s antiwar activism in the US.

### **The Camera as an Observer: Images and Texts as Tools of Resistance**

Dalia El-Shayal, Cairo University, Egypt

History is often viewed through a glimpse of images that offer insights into the past. African American history, for example, is filled with stories of slavery, racial hatred and struggle to escape from poverty. One way of recording this tumultuous history is through photographers who often use their cameras as tools of social commentary and artistic exploration bearing witness to the changes that take place in their society. In most cases, the camera is merely an observer giving expression to many debatable issues.

The history of the interdisciplinary connection between photography and literature, image and text, allows for establishing valid connections. The artists themselves—photographers and writers alike— often deconstruct and reconstruct their personal histories and public personas through the symbolic and expressive imagery in their works. They are both graphic and narrative historians who create a collective biography that both empowers and provides evidence.

This paper will investigate the ‘marginalized’ through a set of photographs by various artists and a lynching play by Michon Boston. The play will be examined as of how it offers insights into the racial context of its time. Used as tools of resistance, both images and texts address such issues as African-American standing within society and their search for identity in an often-inhospitable environment. Roland Barthes’ views on the image will also be used.

### **Visual narratives: Currents and countercurrents on the urban map of Los Angeles**

Eva Zetterman, Karlstad University, Sweden

This paper is about currents and countercurrents in the urban space of Los Angeles with public visual art as point of departure. In 2011, the curating project Pacific Standard Time was launched in Southern California with a collaboration of over sixty cultural institutions coming together to tell the story of the LA art scene. In parallel with the exhibition program, LACMA held a first retrospective of the conceptual performance group Asco and an exhibition by Sandra de la Loza from the Pocho Research Society. The body of works by Asco are situated both at the margins of an avant-garde art scene and the Chicano nationalist Art Movement, and the ephemeral character of their public performances and blurring of chosen visual medium frustrate both archive cataloguing and collecting practices of art institutions and the art market. In the Pocho Research Society, anonymous ‘guerilla historians’ are seeking to give space to erased and invisible histories in the urban space of Los Angeles. The purpose with the paper is to trace critical interventions by Asco and the Pocho Research Society in the politically contested urban space of Los Angeles and explore an ambivalent relationship to mainstream visual art.

### **C. Conservatism: An Enduring Countercurrent in American Politics? II (1D 340)**

#### **Countercurrents in Mass Media: How Political Entertainer Rush Limbaugh Has Influenced American Broadcasting.**

Helene Megaard, University of Oslo, Norway

Conservative radio host Rush Limbaugh’s influence on American broadcasting for the last twenty-five years is indisputable. Limbaugh is credited for single-handedly reviving the AM band which is where most political talk radio can be found today. When he got his breakthrough in the late eighties he represented a countercurrent in the national broadcasting media. His polemic right-wing political satire was the beginning of a surge in “infotainment” as well as conservative programming in American mass media. This paper offers analysis on Limbaugh’s life and work during his time as a nationally syndicated radio host. In an effort to explain the reasons behind Limbaugh’s long lasting appeal I examine his methods as an entertainer and political activist. Furthermore, I research Limbaugh’s impact on American broadcasting.

#### **The *Weekly Standard* vs. Chuck Hagel: a look at the Republican political magazine’s campaign against the appointment of Hagel as Secretary of Defense**

Francis Rønnestad, University of Oslo, Norway

Immediately after the Obama administration announced it was planning to make former Republican Senator Chuck Hagel the next Secretary of Defense, the *Weekly Standard* argued forcefully against the choice. At the forefront of the debate, both amongst supporters of Obama’s choice, like Political Scientist Stephen Walt, as well as among those arguing against Hagel, the issue of Israel have been paramount. This paper explores what it is about Hagel’s opinions on the Middle East the *Standard* reacts to. It also depicts how they shape their arguments compared to other conservative actors in the debate. The paper will show how the *Weekly Standard* has anticipated this appointment for years, and have argued against Hagel’s positions on issues -

ranging from the policy towards Iraq and the War on Terror, to how to handle strategic competitors like Russia. It will also analyze how the magazine depicts Obama's security policy for his second term in light of Hagel's appointment, and how the discourse surrounding Hagel reveals some emerging fractures within GOP foreign policy thinking.

### **Semantics and the Crisis of Conservatism**

Karsten Senkbeil, University of Hildesheim, Germany

This talk examines the difficult situation of the Republican Party after the presidential election of 2012 and the current crisis of American conservatism from a linguistic perspective. This crisis has diverse and complex reasons, and while the prime line of reasoning in the public discussion has been focused on demographics and quantitative analyses of voter turnouts, this paper argues that also on a semantic level, conservative ideologies face serious problems, as they find it increasingly difficult to communicate with American voters, now and in the future. To illuminate this point, a set of linguistic and culture-analytic methods was used to analyze a central 2012 speech of Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney with a critical, discourse analytical perspective, to show how conservative discursive practices have uncoupled from the real-life experiences of many American voters. Extrapolating from this microscopic example, this paper makes the case that formerly harmless expressions and speech acts, which had over decades symbolized and reinforced conservative normativity for a majority of Anglo-Americans, must today be considered sites of hegemonic struggle across demographic boundaries (such as ethnicity and gender) as they have undergone resignification processes on a large scale in mainstream American media and society.

## **Sunday May 26**

11:00-12:00

### **A. Currents and Countercurrents in Scandinavian-American Relations IV (1D 327)**

#### **Contact narratives about Swedish Pioneers and Native Americans in the Smoky Valley**

Angela Falk, Uppsala University, Sweden

The Smoky Valley in Kansas, formerly part of the hunting grounds used by Native Americans, became the destination of Swedish immigrants when prairie land was made accessible to white settlers through the Homestead Act of 1862. Over a period of several decades, thousands of Swedish-born persons migrated to the region. In the 1980s, a local historical society launched an oral history project to tap into the knowledge of long-time residents who were descendants of these Swedish settlers. More than 60 persons were interviewed within the span of a few years. The topics of the interviews ranged widely, but nearly half of the respondents mentioned "Indians" in brief narratives. While a few of the respondents shared multiple Indian stories, some of which contain elements of speculation and the supernatural, it is more frequently the case that



the discourse that emerged in the interviews contains merely the core of a contact narrative. This paper compares the linguistic and discourse structures of the contact narratives with patterns found elsewhere in the oral history collection. The insights gained from these comparisons help us understand the ways that memory is transmitted by oral discourse over generations.

**“–When I think of America at night, no more sleep for me.” The inter-nationalism of Sigmund Skard.**

Ida Jahr, Freie Universität Berlin, Germany/Universitetet i Oslo, Norway

At the start of his career in 1946, Sigmund Skard is quoted to have said that it was now absolutely necessary for Norway to look west for intellectual and cultural guidance, as the German tradition was no longer a viable option. Skard was hailed as a "modern Tocqueville," in early institutionalized American Studies, but, like Tocqueville's texts, Skard's too are not only ambivalent, but ambiguous. In his writing about America and about literature, two different metaphorical languages are fighting for prevalence on the page. On the one hand, Skard was extolling the virtues of a modernization of Europe through American social science and influences from interdisciplinary American Studies (like many after him, Skard described American Studies as a spearhead usable to modernize European academia). At the same time, a different sense of time is visible in Skard's writing. America was not yet mature as a culture; American influence on Norway would thus be detrimental. Early institutionalized American Studies was not only international, it was predicated on inter-nationality, and is therefore a particularly apt site for exploration of currents in thinking about internationalism and post-WWII geopolitics of knowledge. In my dissertation I do so based on the career of Sigmund Skard.

**B. Southern Poetry and Politics (1D 328)**

**Still Dancing with Strom: Nikky Finney's Poetry. Poetry in Terms of Race, Family, Gender, Place, and Region**

Jan Nordby Gretlund, University of Southern Denmark

Great poems that speak to our situations are published today, and some of the very best by black women. One of them is Nikky Finney, who won the 2011 National Book Award for poetry.

Finney's poems deal with race, lost values, and abuse; the poetry is in plain words and the imagery is powerfully evocative. Finney emphasizes her ancestry, African lineage, and identity. She celebrates slaves who rebelled, and delights in the Gullah culture of her home state. She abhors the images of blacks that are fed to the world in movies.

Finney offers poetry that will allow you to discover that you could do worse than read poems. She enables you to catch glimpses of privileged information about life. Her poems are frank about police brutality and same gender sexual relations. But in spite of all the justified sound and fury of the uncompromising political poems, Finney's greatest promise as a poet resides in her ability to breathe true life into domestic and universal situations.

If you callously reject all poetry, you should right away let Finney pull you into her fresh pool of poems.

### **Natasha Trethewey, *Native Guard: Remembering and Redefining Southern History in Poetry***

Hans H. Skei, University of Oslo, Norway

In between poems in memory of her mother, we find another set of poems which relate to the poet's childhood experience from growing up in Mississippi in the late sixties; poems with a heavy emphasis on her parents' interracial, and thus illegal, marriage.

The central and defining poems in the collection are those about the "Native Guard" – a regiment of black soldiers in the Union Army during the Civil War. Questions of history, slavery, race, inequality, and injustice find poetic expression in a book of poems of unusual strength, thematically as well as poetically.

The poet most certainly does not hate the South. She loves it, not because of its virtues, but despite its faults. And the graceful language cannot hide the underlying political lessons that individual as well as collective history can teach us.

### **C. Against the Current? Resistance and Accommodation in 20th Century Folk Music Revivalism (1D 340)**

#### **The Ballad and the Almanac Song as Protest and *Detournement***

Bent Sørensen, Aalborg University, Denmark

This paper takes a look at the practice of the radical leftist singing group The Almanac Singers (whose members included Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger, among others) from their earliest anti-capitalist and anti-war songs to their later, more liberal contributions to negotiating a unified (war) effort against Fascism.

Issues addressed herein will include assessing strategies in the practices of musical performers who have political agendas, investigating the usefulness of Guy Debord's terminology of *detournement* ("turning expressions of the capitalist system and its media culture against itself") and recuperation, as well as the Birmingham School's set of terms: commodification, familiarization and incorporation.

The paper will progress through a lyrics and performance analysis, and will contextualize these with attempts to situate The Almanac Singers culturally and politically in the turbulent public and clandestine discourse climate of the US in the late '30s and early '40s. After all a mixed-race group with clear Communist ties could not escape scrutiny and interference, so the paper will be touching upon the role of intelligences services and the FBI in blackening the reputation of The Almanac Singers.

### **This Land Is Not Your Land: Alan Lomax and the Gaelic Folk, 1949-1952**

Dale Carter, Aarhus University, Denmark

The folklorist Alan Lomax saw his lifelong effort to foster appreciation of vernacular music as something that set him against many currents. His work on behalf of music by those deemed uncultivated and incapable of survival in the marketplace, allied to his links to organizations and causes considered controversial and un-American, placed him beyond the nation's mainstream leading him to leave the United States following his blacklisting during the post-war Red Scare.

Yet no sooner had he begun collecting materials in Europe for a library of the world's roots music, than he found himself persona non grata amongst some of those very tradition-bearers whose number he had long championed, as well as some of the overseas folklorists whose work he claimed to honour. He did so in large part as a result of his perceived embodiment of modernity, materialism and mass culture. This paper reads aspects of Lomax's pursuit of Gaelic music during visits to Ireland and Scotland during 1950 and 1951 as an exercise in role-reversals in which counter-current turned mainstream. Drawing on unpublished documentary materials, the paper argues that this encounter between assumed national identities and local interests saw an ideal ethnography struggle to transcend the anthropological gap.

1:00-2:30

### **A. Literary Interventions (1D 327)**

#### **Reconstructing Human-Animal Relations in Jane Smiley's *Horse Heaven*: Space, Nation, Anthropocentrism**

Jopi Nyman, University of Eastern Finland

This paper addresses Jane Smiley's novel *Horse Heaven* (2000) set in the world of US thoroughbred horse racing. In its attempt to represent no less than the entirety of American horse culture, involving trainers and jockeys, small owners and businessmen, gamblers and animal communicators, Smiley's novel tells the stories of several individual horses, including the aged and abused race horse Mr. T., whose views are accessed with the help of animal communicator. Located in various important sites of US horse racing ranging from Kentucky to various race courses, *Horse Heaven* presents a series of horsescapes where humans and horses are involved in attempt to redefine human-animal relations. The horses of *Horse Heaven* are involved in an equine remapping of America as a national and symbolic space, in a critique of its individualist and anthropocentric ideologies, and in the tension between nationalist and transnationalist understandings of the United States. By showing that the horse is present in all these processes, *Horse Heaven* seeks to renew conventional hierarchies and discourses marginalizing the role of non-humans in culture and history.

**The Aim Was Song: Patchett's *Bel Canto***

David Cowart, University of South Carolina, USA

In her 2001 novel *Bel Canto*, Ann Patchett brings the moral imagination to bear on the political violence of the age. Though it represents this political violence and teases with the elements of a politicized aesthetic, her story resists—I argue—much of the ideology that seems so widespread in critical discourse about literature. *Bel Canto* seems remarkably fresh, that is, because its rhapsodic celebration of art dispenses with—or at least reframes—the expected politics and ideology. Its author candidly aspires to subordinate politics to aesthetic jouissance. She reaffirms art's ability, however temporarily, to dispel what E. M. Forster called panic and emptiness. Like Forster, too (not to mention the Beethoven he invokes in *Howards End*), she understands that the sublunary disorder cannot be dispelled permanently. She depicts the inevitable return of violence, moreover, with nothing less than tragic intensity. Attempts to reproach the author for false consciousness (does she not see that opera is an instrument of cultural imperialism?) strike one as decidedly misguided. Such strictures imply that one can weep for beauty wed to a political vision of one kind or another, but not for beauty alone. Patchett, whose characters literally weep when they hear the singing of Roxane Coss after several miserable days of captivity, depicts the aesthetic experience as a relief from political strife.

**The Dream of a World House: Politics of Compassion and Literature as Social Knowledge**

Amina El-Annan, Yale University, USA

**Saul Bellow: Being an Intellectual in the United States**

Mariya Dogan, Ankara, Turkey

**B. Poetry and Politics (1D 328)**

**The Planetary Turn: Emily Dickinson as Political Theorist**

Renee Bergland, Simmons College, USA

Addressing the NAAS Conference theme of currents and crosscurrents, this paper will engage with current US refusal to engage with environmental politics and climate change.

In this paper, I propose to outline Dickinson's theory of planetarity, and explain what it offers to current discussions of the planetary that have been forwarded by critics such as Lawrence Buell, Wai Chee Dimock, and Gayatri Spivak. These scholars argue that contemporary criticism must take a planetary turn.

I argue that Emily Dickinson's thoughts about the planetary offer a remarkably sophisticated and useful theorization of planetarity as a necessarily telescoping perspective that simultaneously

engages with very grounded, concrete, local focus on particular environments (“a Speck upon a Ball”) and the largest scope of atmospheric changes (“out upon circumference”). Dickinson’s planetarity can be understood in conversation with Spivak, Dimock, and Buell, but her particular poetic language is worth our attention. United States politics and criticism must begin to see the planet as a planet; Dickinson’s works can help us attain the planetary perspective.

### **“Poet, Be Seated at the Piano”: The Poetics of ‘Relational Place-Making’ and The Politics of Aesthetic Autonomy**

Gül Bilge Han, Stockholm University, Sweden

In this paper, I interpret Stevens’s emphasis on poetic “resistance” in the 1930s as a claim for aesthetic autonomy. A central tenet of Stevens’s thinking about aesthetic autonomy turns on the effort to come to grips with the conditions of poetry’s relation to social crises. One way of negotiating aesthetic autonomy, recurrent in Stevens’s poems throughout his oeuvre, is to construct concrete endogenous zones for poetry. The allegorical construction of architectural archetypes reveals how Stevens tackles the problem of relationality and autonomy in terms of producing, confronting and redefining spaces. *Ideas of Order* is fraught with habitable structures, metaphors that body forth the desire to stake out an aesthetic territory, such that resist pre-ordained models of how poetry passes into a point of contact with social reality. The poetics of autonomy, in this sense, is derived not from “detachment” but from a “distance” characterized by the endeavor to question a *given politics of art*. Seen from this spectrum, Stevens’s defense of aesthetic autonomy carries political implications as long as we are ready to widen the scope of what politics means in relation to his aesthetics. In carrying the theoretical discussion of aesthetic autonomy into historical scrutiny, I seek to challenge the established notions of modernist autonomy as the art object’s immunity from the world.

### **Aesthetics versus Politics in American Poetry**

Maria Proitsaki, Göteborgs Universitet/Högskolan i Halmstad, Sweden

Building on my paper “Black Aesthetic and Beyond: Aesthetics and Ideology in the Poetry of Nikki Giovanni and Rita Dove” (*Moderna Språk*, 2008) where I explored how Dove’s take on blackness in her poetry is different (more subtle) to Giovanni’s and considered whether the recognition Dove has received is linked to the sophistication of her verse, but also her more relaxed stance regarding her black identity, I now turn to the controversy surrounding the publication of *The Penguin Anthology of 20th Century American Poetry* (2011) edited by Dove. This erupted when Helen Vendler attacked Dove in *NY Review of Books* for “shift[ing] the balance, introducing more black poets and giving them significant amounts of space, in some cases more space than is given to better-known authors” and came into bloom with Dove in turn accusing Vendler of having “an agenda beyond aesthetics.” Soon Dove vs. Vendler was an “uproar” interpreted as a race row, but also a symptom of a changing poetry canon. Focusing on Vendler’s views on Dove and Dove’s own changing views on blackness, I hope to enrich the debate about poetry aesthetics vs. poetry politics as it materialised in this case of locking horns of traditional versus new views on the poetry canon.

## **C. Rhetoric and Democratic Politics (1D 340)**

### **Rights and responsibilities in New Democrat ideology**

Anne Mørk, University of Southern Denmark

This presentation explores national service as a concept in the early 1980s and 1990s as a synthesis of opposing tendencies in American political culture, such as rights v. responsibilities, and individualism v. the common good. New Democrat Bill Clinton set out to “save” the American people from the bureaucracy and inefficiency of the welfare state while simultaneously restoring their faith in the government. AmeriCorps was created for this very purpose. With his suggestion of a modern-day GI Bill – with military service exchange with social work – Clinton was appealing to the notion of the federal government as an instrument of social change, inclusion, and the common good while using a conservative rhetoric of personal responsibility to prevent conservative criticism.

### **Carl Kaysen: A Liberal Voice through 50 Years**

Kasper Grotle Rasmussen, Aarhus University, Denmark

2013 will mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Limited Test Ban Treaty – one of President John F. Kennedy’s most liberal or idealist foreign policy accomplishments and the first treaty seeking to curb the Cold War arms race. A central actor in its creation was Carl Kaysen (1920-2010). An economist by training and long-time university professor, Kaysen was a quiet intellectual, who nevertheless managed to make his mark as a consistent advocate for international peace and disarmament through 50 years; from his entry into government service in 1961 to his death in 2010.

Not many scholars have looked specifically at Kaysen’s contributions, but if prompted, few would probably underestimate his importance. He was deputy to President Kennedy’s National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy and right-hand man to Averell Harriman, who negotiated the Test Ban Treaty in Moscow in 1963. In those capacities, Kaysen worked to secure a peaceful outcome to the Berlin Crisis of 1961-62, where he advocated a policy of accommodation towards the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and he also labored to institute controls over nuclear weapons – most successfully, of course, in crafting the Test Ban Treaty.

This paper proposes to examine Kaysen’s contribution to the development of a liberal American foreign policy in the early 1960’s and specifically to look at the nature of Kaysen’s actions and advice and the reason and background for their existence.

### **The repositioning of U.S. policy toward Egypt in the wake of the Arab Spring**

Gilles Vandal, Université de Sherbrooke, Canada

During the presidential campaign of 2008, Barack Obama regularly criticized the George W. Bush’s policy and promised that once he became president, he would implement major changes

based on negotiation and multilateralism. From the beginning of his term, the difference in the Obama approach in foreign policy was particularly obvious in dealing with the Islamic World as shown by his Ankara and Cairo speeches. This was even more apparent with Egypt. Indeed, in January 2011, Obama chose to break away from three decades of a steadfast support to the Mubarak regime and to embrace the Arab Spring movement by throwing its administration support to the protesters of the Tahir square. Furthermore, he asserted that his administration was committed to diplomacy and that he was ready to deal with any divisive issue in a constructive way. This promise of a new beginning in the relationship between the two countries, joined to his conciliatory tone, singularly contrasted with the rhetoric of the George Bush administration on building a new Democratic Middle-East. The Egyptian issue becomes one of the most important tests of President Obama's new beginning with the Islam World.