The Genres of Genre

A Conference on Form, Format, and Cultural Formations

SANAS Biennial Conference
2-3 November, 2018
University of Lausanne
Welcome to the Biennial SANAS Conference of 2018: 
*The Genres of Genre: A Conference on Form, Format, and Cultural Formations*

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The organizers express their thanks to the sponsors and partners of this conference:
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Swiss Association of University Teachers of English
SANAS Biennial Conference

The Genres of Genre: A Conference on Form, Format, and Cultural Formations

Nov. 2 and 3, 2018, Lausanne

North American Studies have always had an intense but ambivalent relationship to genre, as these narrative patterns have participated in nationalist processes as well as in narratives of resistance. Emerging at the beginning of the twentieth century from concerns about naturalism and realism, American literary scholarship after WWII avoided the politicized post-war atmosphere by making the ‘romance’ the quintessential American novel genre, while cinematic genres such as the musical or the Western contributed to amplifying the mythic dimension of American self-definition. Since then, American Studies scholars have pioneered influential work on melodrama, the American Gothic, the jeremiad and other genres. Concurrently, Canadian literature’s prominent nation-building narratives were framed as documentary tales of regionalism, historical novels and social realism before evolving into dystopian and postmodern fiction, most famously by Margaret Atwood. Thus, among the recurring questions posed by genre is the conflicted relationship between literature/art and its social, historical, and cultural context. Terms such as ‘the political unconscious’ (Jameson), ‘cultural work’ (Tompkins), ‘narrative mode’ (Williams) and ‘performative’ (Austin, Turner) have been centrally determining, over the years, to help us understand how genres work and what they do. This conference therefore seeks to explore what roles genre plays in American and Canadian nation-building and counter-narratives, and how it evolves nowadays.

While the cultural concept of genre has been crucial in creating North American national literatures and identities, it shows equal potential for resistance, subversion and transformation of these constructed national characters. Thus, how does genre reconcile this seemingly contradictory potential for creating narratives of nation-building as well as counter-culture? How do feminist, queer, Indigenous, Latino/a, African-American/Canadian and Asian-American/Canadian writers use, appropriate, and subvert specific genres to resist and protest social injustices. How do they use genre to imagine alternative models or redeem social injustice? With Prof. Linda Williams (UC Berkeley), Prof. Ronald Schleifer (University of Oklahoma), and Prof. Sarah Henzi (University of Montreal), experts on the role of genre in North American studies as our keynote speakers, this conference proposes to be a space for a renewed discussion about what genre has meant for North American studies as well as American and Canadian culture, and what its future might be.

Possible topics could include, but are not restricted to:

- How specific genres (e.g. the Western, social melodrama, crime fiction, rap, inaugural speech, jeremiad, combat film) have changed or been renewed
- New genres that have emerged in recent years (e.g. the series, video games, cli-
fi, petro-fiction)

- The critical viability of the term ‘genre’ as opposed to ‘mode’ or narrative ‘form’ or other
- Theme-oriented vs. form-oriented genres (e.g. asylum fiction vs. found-footage films) – are these ‘really’ genres?
- Assessment of recent scholarly work on form (e.g. Caroline Levine)
- Revisiting of older scholarly work and its influence (e.g. Fredric Jameson)
- Narrative/poetic forms and national identity
- Hybridity and intersectionality of form
- Genre and gender
- Genre and race
- Genre and imperialism (e.g. adventure, imperial gothic)
- Genre and environmentalism/ecology (e.g. cli-fi, petro-fiction, eco-gothic, the naturalist essay, nature poetry, etc.)
- Genre and resistance or subversion
- The continuous revival and repurposing of the fairy tale
- New developments in the North American short story

Please send panel or paper abstracts of 200-300 words and a short biographical note of 100-150 words by **May 14, 2018 (extended deadline)** to sanas.conference2018@gmail.com. For more information visit www.unil.ch/sanas2018.
Conference Program

Friday, Nov. 2, 2018:

08:30-09:30: SANAS Board Meeting  (Amphimax 414)
09:00-10:00: Registration  (Amphimax 414)
09:30-10:00: Welcome Coffee  (Amphimax 414)
10:00-10:30: Welcome from the Conference Organizers  (Amphimax 414)
10:30-12:00: Keynote Address 1  (Amphimax 414)
   Chair: Cécile Heim
12:00-13:30: Lunch at Da Nino’s  (Unithèque)
13:30-15:00: Panel A

Panel A1: Symptoms of Genre
   Chair: Roman Bischof
   (Amphimax 414)
   Franziska Gygax – “American Feminist Writers on Being Ill: Life Writing, Illness, and Theory
   Pascal Sigg – “Defining Literary Journalism: Historical Complications of Form, Function, Practice, Value and Reference

Panel A2: The Genre of Law:
   Chair: Patrick Vincent
   (Amphipole 340)
   Thomas Dikant – “Prevention, Thriller: Allan Pinkerton’s The Mollie Maguires and the Detectives”
   Audrey Loetscher – “Ecopolitics, Climate Change Litigation and the Writing of U.S. Environmental Policy”

Panel A3: Transgressions in Genre
   Chair: Sofie Behluli
   (Amphipole 338.1)
   Morgane Ghilardi – “Playing (with) Horror: Video Games and the Deconstruction of Genre”
   Sixta Quassdorf – “I would prefer not to take a clerkship’: The Office Novel”
   Paula Barba Guerrero – “Beyond the Post-Apocalyptic Novel: Endorsing Post-humanism to Dissolve the Nation in Octavia E Butler’s Parable of the Sower and Colson Whitehead’s Zone One”

Cécile Heim – “Creating Belonging: Reading Law through Genre in Louise Erdrich’s The Round House”
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<td><strong>B1: Forms of Genre</strong></td>
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<td>Chair: Benjamin Pickford</td>
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<td>James Dorson – “Form vs. Genre”</td>
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<td>Olga Thierbach-McLean – “Shifting Meanings of Asianness in Cyberpunk Movies Since the 1980s”</td>
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<td><strong>B3: Gendered Spaces in Genres</strong></td>
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<td>Chair: Ana Gomes Correia</td>
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<td>Stella Castelli – “Transgressing Genres: Tarantino’s Kill Bill as a Reconfiguration of the Traditional Cooking Show”</td>
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<td>19:30:</td>
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Saturday, Nov. 3, 2018:

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<tr>
<td>09:00-10:30</td>
<td>SANAS AGM</td>
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<td>10:30-11:00</td>
<td>Coffee break</td>
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<td>11:00-12:30</td>
<td>Panel C</td>
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### C1: Generating Space and History

**Chair:** Julia Straub  
*(Anthropole 5033)*

- **Simon Krause** – “Playing History in Video Games: The Historicity of *Assassin’s Creed III*”
- **Malgorzata Socha** – “Genre Revisited: A Revisionist Approach to the Western”
- **Ridvan Askin** – “Absolute Form: Traveling the ‘great outdoors’ in Margaret Fuller’s *Summer on the Lakes, in 1843***

### C2: Submission/Subversion: Challenging Gender Images through Genre

**Chair:** Thomas Austenfeld  
*(Anthropole 5196)*

- **Nasrin Babakhani** – “A New Face of Realism: An Other Thinking from Marginalized Position”
- **Maria Lombard** – “Genre and Women’s Narratives of Motherhood in Contemporary American Literature”
- **Yuwei Ge** – “Dancing with the Wolves: Women’s Images and Fairy Tales in American Political Television Series”

12:30-14:00: Lunch at Da Nino’s  
*(Unithèque)*
### Panel D

**D1: Performing Genres, Performing Identities**  
Chair: Ana Gomes Correia  
(Anthropole 5033)

- **Boris Vejdovsky** – “The Performance of the Western Genre in American Culture: Rhetoric and Symbolic Forms in American Western Movies”
- **Julia Ditter** – “The Evolution of Sitcom: A Case Study of Brooklyn Nine-Nine and One Day at a Time”
- **Anne Korfmacher** – “I can tell an Indian when I see one’: Deconstructing ‘Indianness’ in Der Schuh des Manitu and Green Grass, Running Water”

**D2: The Socio-Cultural Leverage of Genre**  
Chair: Aurélie Zurbrügg  
(Anthropole 5125)

- **Amina Grunewald** – “Visualizing Non-Speciesist Protest: Jo-Anne McArthur’s Photo-Documentaries as Narratives of Animal Advocacy and Means of Resistance”

**D3: Genres of ‘Race’: Science Fiction and Racecraft**  
Chair: Patrizia Zanella  
(Anthropole 5196)

- **Jesse Ramirez** – “Are Orcs Racist? Reflections on Bright”
- **Christine Vogt-William** – “‘My Skin Is Not My Own: Twinned Bodies and Racecraft in Frank Herbert’s Dune”
- **Bryan Banker** – “Earthers, Dusters, Belters: The Politics of Race and Class in Syfy’s The Expense”

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**14:00-15:30:**  
15:30-16:00: Coffee break  
(Hall 1130)

16:00-17:30: **Keynote Address 3**  
(Anthropole 2120)  
**Linda Williams** – “Beyond Genre: The Modalities of Melodrama”  
Chair: Agnieszka Soltysik - Monnet

**17:30-18:00:**  
Closing Remarks from the Conference Organizers  
(Anthropole 2120)

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From 18:00 onward: Informal dinner in town
What is (are) Indigenous Literature(s)? Does (do) it (they) matter?
This paper examines how contemporary Indigenous writers are turning to alternative genres (or generic alternatives) such as science fiction, speculative fiction, erotica and new media to explore resurgence by way of different kinds of relationships – between men, women, elders and youth, oppressors, victims and lovers – and how individuals within a society are informed to function in a certain way based on the “normativity” of these interrelationships. By providing a tribune that speaks beyond national and generational divides, these literary and generic interventions – or, as Cherokee scholar Daniel Heath Justice proposes, “WonderWorks” – address the disappearance and erasure, through colonial practices, of intimacy and vulnerability, and how these need to be re-inscribed into how we relate to and narrate one another. Through an analysis of, on the one hand, artistic languages and rhetorics and, on the other hand, the critical angles at work within a vast attempt at resurgence, the examples I will present seek to actualize the decolonial project by way of articulating the different sovereignties (intellectual, artistic, affective) at play. They thereby enable a better practice of both intellectual and affective postures (Million 2009), which ensure that respectful, active, living and ongoing relationships are maintained, in how we approach, research, and teach Indigenous Literatures; in other words, to always bear in mind that, yes, “Indigenous Literatures Matter” (Justice 2018).

SARAH HENZI, Ph.D. is Assistant Professor of Indigenous Literatures in the Département de littératures et de langues du monde at Université de Montréal. Prior to that, she was an FQRSC-funded Postdoctoral Fellow in the First Nations and Indigenous Studies Program at the University of British Columbia (2013-2014) and a Visiting Scholar at McGill University’s Institute for the Study of Canada (2015-2016). She is also the Secretary of the Indigenous Literary Studies Association (ILSA) and Assistant Editor for Francophone Writing for Canadian Literature. Her research focuses on genres that are redefining and expanding upon what has been considered thus far as “literature” in the field of Indigenous Literary Studies: comic books, graphic novels, science fiction, fantasy, speculative fiction, film script, and erotica. Also, the prevalence of new media and of the audio-visual and digital worlds are providing exceptional entry points to the land and territories (whether spatial, discursive, aesthetic) that many artists and writers may no longer have access to. Her work also seeks to promote the Francophone literary and artistic works of Indigenous peoples in Québec. Furthermore, she is a contributor to the Oxford Handbook on Indigenous American Literatures (2014), the Routledge Companion to Native American Literature (2015) and Learn, Teach, Challenge: Approaches to Indigenous Literatures in the 21st Century (2016), and has publications in Canadian Literature, Recherches amérindiennes du Québec, the Canadian Review of Comparative Literature, Quebec Studies, Studies for Canadian Literature, the London Journal of Canadian Studies, and Australasian Canadian Studies.
Ronald Schleifer -- “Death, Literary Form, and Affective Comprehension: Black Humor in The House of God and the Neurological Basis of Genre” (Friday, Nov. 2; 18:00-19:30; Amphimax 414)

This presentation examines the relation of death – and particularly the overwhelming facticity of death – to literary genre. Focusing on Samuel Shem’s novel, The House of God, which portray medical students encountering death and dying on a daily basis for the first time in their lives, it examines aesthetic and literary genres in relation to evolutionarily developed defense mechanisms. More specifically, it deploys David Huron’s meticulous neurological study of the power of music, Sweet Anticipation: Music and the Psychology of Expectation, to examine the ways literary genres call upon and shape emotions of fear, awe, and laughter – emotions which respond to life-threatening situations. That is, while John Frow nicely situates genre in relation to rhetorical and cognitive studies – and especially the manner in which “accounts of genre in the New Rhetorical tradition are interested in the ways discourse works as a practice” (2007: 1630) – in this presentation I argue that the “working” of genre can be understood as provoking emotional response as well as stimulating action in the world. A defining instance of such provocation is the cognitive and affective engagement with death and dying.

RONALD SCHLEIFER is George Lynn Cross Research Professor of English and Adjunct Professor in the College of Medicine. From 1976 to 2000 he served as editor of Genre: Forms of Discourse and Culture; and from 1986 to 1999 he served as co-editor of The Oklahoma Project for Discourse and Theory, a book series published by the University of Oklahoma Press. In 1999 he was the director of the Annual Convention for the Society for Literature and Science, held in Norman. In 2012 he served as interim editor of Configurations: A Journal of Literature, Science, and Technology, where he currently serves on the editorial board. He is also presently co-editor of Mariner 10: Cross-Disciplinary DVD-ROMS, a series of electronic, interactive titles published by the University of Pennsylvania Press. He has written, translated, or edited twenty books. In recent years, he has been invited to lecture in Lausanne, Moscow, Salzburg, China, Singapore, Bristol, Durham, and London. He teaches twentieth-century literature as well as literary and cultural theory for undergraduate and graduate students, and courses on literature and medicine at the Norman and OU Health Sciences Center campuses. He has also developed a seminar for scholarly writing for graduate students, which he has offered at OU in a campus-wide course sponsored by the Graduate College. He recently completed A Political Economy of Modernism: Literature, Post-Classical Economics, and the Lower Middle-Class, that will appear from Cambridge in 2018. This book, along with Modernism and Time and Modernism and Popular Music, will complete his long-term study, “The Culture of Modernism.”
When we speak of melodrama as a mode it seems to add significance to an old-fashioned genre that has been much maligned. When Peter Brooks defined the modality of the melodramatic imagination, he gave the old theatrical genre of melodrama a better reason for being than badly plotted, overwrought emotion and sensation. Brooks’s rehabilitation of melodrama through its modality gave a greater cultural import to a “spirit of an age” rather than to what might otherwise have seemed a passing theatrical fad on the French stage. In the mode of melodrama, he located a hidden morality that offered a compensatory good behind all the apparent senselessness. But if Brooks’ move with his 1976, The Melodramatic Imagination: Melodrama, Balzac, Henry James and the Mode of Excess was to seek the moral good hidden in the melodramatic mode, ever since the millennium many recent critics of the melodramatic mode have uncovered a diametrically opposed evil—the other side of the coin of a famously Manichaean genre. Perhaps not surprisingly, some of the most interesting recent scholarship on the modality of melodrama has sought to show what happens, in American politics, film and culture, when melodrama runs amok. In this presentation, I seek to understand these two entwined judgements about the melodramatic mode and the way they have been applied to crucial assessments of American democracy.

LINDA WILLIAMS teaches courses on popular moving-image genres (pornography, melodrama, and “body genres” of all sorts). She has also taught courses on Oscar Micheaux and Spike Lee, Luis Bunuel and Pedro Almodovar, melodrama, film theory, selected “sex genres,” and The Wire. Her books include a psychoanalytic study of Surrealist cinema, Figures of Desire (1981), a co-edited volume of feminist film criticism (Re-vision, 1984), an edited volume on film spectatorship, Viewing Positions (1993) and Reinventing Film Studies (co-edited with Christine Gledhill, 2000). In 1989, she published a study on pornographic film entitled Hard Core: Power, Pleasure and the Frenzy of the Visible (second edition 1999). This study of moving-image pornography looks seriously at the history and form of an enormously popular genre. She has also edited the anthology Porn Studies (Duke, 2004) and in 2008, published Screening Sex (Duke, 2008). Her work on genre has often been rerouted to work on modes instead as influenced by her study of melodrama. In 1999 Williams received a Guggenheim Fellowship for research on her 2001 Playing the Race Card: Melodramas of Black and White, from Uncle Tom to O.J. Simpson (2001, Princeton) – an analysis of racial melodrama spanning the 19th and 20th centuries of American culture. In this work she elaborated the notion of melodrama as a mode, not a genre, so too in her recent book On The Wire (2014, Duke). Williams has received Berkeley’s Distinguished Teaching Award in 2004 and in 2011 was appointed Faculty Research Lecturer. In 2013 she received the SCMS Career Achievement Award. Her most recent book is Melodrama Unbound: Across History, Media and National Cultures, co-edited with Christine Gledhill.
Panel A1: Symptoms of Genre

Franziska Gygax -- American Feminist Writers on Being Ill: Life Writing, Illness, and Theory

In her essay *On Being Ill* Virginia Woolf considers illness to be one of the experiences that affect our lives the most, and she even wonders why “illness has not taken its place with love and battle and jealousy among the prime themes of literature”. She theorizes the intricate connection between literature and illness in ways that foreshadow recent discussions in the fields of literature and medicine, medical humanities, and narrative medicine. One particularly prominent topic of these fields concerns life writing texts on the experience of illness, so-called autopathographies, a great number of which have been written by feminist writers and theorists. In my paper I want to discuss a selection of autobiographical texts by American feminist writers that on the one hand focus on their experience of illness, but on the other hand theorize relations between illness and cultural, social, and political issues. The selected texts by Margaret Fuller (“Summer on the Lakes”), Audre Lorde (*The Cancer Journals*), Siri Hustvedt (*The Shaking Woman: A History of My Nerves*), Nancy K. Miller (“My Metastatic Life”), and Susan Gubar (*Memoir of a Debulked Woman*) provide ample evidence that critical life writing on the experience of illness challenges and resists traditional concepts of illness, medicine, and theory – and autobiography.

FRANZISKA GYGAX, professor emerita of American literature at the University of Basel, Switzerland, is the author of *Serious Daring from Within: Female Narrative Strategies in Eudora Welty’s Novels* (1990) and *Gender and Genre in Gertrude Stein* (1998). She has also published various articles in the fields of autobiography and literature and medicine. Her most recent publications in this field are *Narrative Matters in Medical Contexts across Disciplines*, ed. together with Miriam A. Locher (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2015) and „Zu Ende erzählen: Leben und Sterben im Text.” *Hermeneutische Blätter: Sterben/Erzählen* (Zurich 2016). She was also the co-director of an SNF interdisciplinary research project “Life (Beyond) Writing: Illness Narratives.”

Pascal Sigg -- The Human Medium: Literary Journalism, Reportage and the Reporter as Witness

Literary journalism has repeatedly been defined as hybrid genre of fact and fiction, borrowing from ideas and concepts of both literature and journalism. In one of the most recent definitions, Roiland calls it a “style of nonfiction” which blends “immersive reporting with narrative writing.” In the past century, this writing has been named not only New Journalism, but also New New Journalism, narrative journalism, slow journalism, long form journalism, literary, creative or narrative nonfiction, postmodern journalism, fable of fact, or narradescriptive journalism. As these terms indicate, scholars have not only approached the same texts from different theoretical perspectives, they have also sought to define them on different grounds. Many scholars have preferred formal and functional criteria, thus defining literary journalism as superior entertainment, as a kind of “cognitively efficient” narrative realism that takes the unhindered representation of reality for granted. However, based on Frus’ assessments that “a writer's ostentatious style does not on its own materialize the text in order to offer the reader a critical or alternative position” and that “we are ... unable to recover the event outside of textual evidence”, I argue that literary journalism is too broad a term to describe this genre. Instead, I use reportage, a term that has – although established in German literary studies – not been used for the analysis of genre in English. In order to
define reportage as texts whose narrator attains the role of a witness, according to Peters the “paradigm case of a medium: the means by which experience is supplied to others who lack the original.” Reportage’s defining tension can thus be situated in what Phelan more broadly calls a “constant negotiation between the twin demands of referentiality and the communication of thematic, affective, and ethical significance.”

**PASCAL SIGG** is a Ph.D. student at the English Department of the University of Zurich studying as a visiting scholar at Boston College in the spring semester 2018. He holds a B.A. degree in Journalism and Communication from the Zurich University of Applied Sciences (ZHAW), a B.A. in English and German from the University of Bern and an M.A. in English and Comparative Literature from the University of Zurich. In his Ph.D. project, he analyzes the experimental reportage of writers such as David Foster Wallace, George Saunders, John Jeremiah Sullivan, Mac McClelland and Rachel Kaadzi Ghansah. His research interests include nonfictional literature, realism, literary & media theory, rhetorical narratology, history of knowledge, narrativity of emotions and culture of sports.

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**Panel A2: The Genre of Law**

_Thomas Dikant -- Prevention, Thriller: Allan Pinkerton’s_  
*The Mollie Maguires and the Detectives*

In the following paper, I argue that Allan Pinkerton’s true crime narrative *The Mollie Maguires and the Detectives* should be understood as a thriller that turns towards the paradigm of criminal prevention. In accounts of the detective genre in the United States, the period between Edgar Allan Poe’s classic detective stories and Dashiell Hammett’s invention of the hard-boiled detective—the late nineteenth century—is oftentimes skipped over. However, not only is this a period when, as Michael Denning points out, the “figure of the detective emerges in American popular fiction,” but it is also a time when the rules of the genre are transformed. Allan Pinkerton’s *The Mollie Maguires and the Detectives* is based on a real-life investigation of the Pinkerton agency in the Anthracite coal region of Pennsylvania. Since this fictionalized account was published in 1877—after the conclusion of the investigation, after the trial, and after the execution of several persons found guilty of murder—contemporary readers of Pinkerton’s true crime novel could not read *The Mollie Maguires* as a whodunit: they knew who. This narrative details how the Mollie Maguires, an Irish-American secret society whose existence has never been proven, terrorized the Anthracite coal region, and how one of Pinkerton’s detectives succeeds in infiltrating this secret society. Moreover, in Pinkerton’s semi-fictional novel, suspense is created by the reader’s desire to find out whether a Pinkerton detective succeeds in preventing murders from happening. Allan Pinkerton’s true crime novel is not just prospective, which is one of the characteristics of a thriller, but it is also a thriller built around prevention. Successful prevention, however, is a fiction not supported by evidence in the historical Mollie Maguires trials. Prevention is Pinkerton’s invention, both as a legitimizing fiction and as an important element of the genre of the thriller.

**THOMAS DIKANT** is a Visiting Assistant Professor (wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter) in the Department of Literature at the John F. Kennedy Institute for North American Studies at the Free University Berlin. His first book, *Landschaft und Territorium: Amerikanische Literatur, Expansion und die Krise der Nation*, 1784-1866, appeared with W. Fink in 2014, and his
Articles have appeared with or are forthcoming from *ESQ: A Journal of the American Renaissance, Amerikastudien/American Studies, and Early American Literature*. He is currently working on his “Habilitationsschrift,” tentatively titled “On Consequences: Law, Action, and the American Novel, 1870-1930.” Thomas Dikant has been a Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Chicago and a Visiting scholar at NYU and UC Berkeley. He has received his Dr. phil. in American Studies from the Free University Berlin.

**Audrey Loetscher -- Ecopolitics, Climate Change Litigation and the Writing of U.S. Environmental Policy**

While the history of environmental law has recorded successful juridical cases from an ecologist’s standpoint, these have often revolved around monetary compensation following man-made disasters. Unlike other areas of civil rights, no Supreme Court ruling equivalent in magnitude to the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* edict or, more recently, to the *Obergefell v. Hodges* decision that legalized same-sex marriage, has been observed in the field of environmental law. However, as a study conducted by the UNEP and Columbia law school shows, the number of legal cases has soared, most notably in the U.S., where a record 600 lawsuits have been or are currently being settled, which all address the threat posed to the environment and the unwillingness or inability of the state to protect its citizens. Stepping in this growing trend, twenty-one youths filed a lawsuit against the U.S. government in 2015, arguing that the latter’s actions had exacerbated climate change and hence violated their rights to life, liberty, and property. Originally scheduled for February 2018 at the District Court of Oregon in Eugene, the trial has been postponed until October 2018. Regardless of its outcome, this lawsuit will provide important insight into U.S. environmental law in determining whether the harm caused by climate change gives plaintiffs legal standing; in deciding to regard it as a possible judicial matter or, on the contrary, to relegate it to the ranks of issues deemed exclusively political; and in ruling on the admissibility of a constitutional right to a safe climate. In that sense, and beyond the judicial intertext, *Juliana v. United States* will highlight the role of the broader ecopolitical narrative in compelling the nation to (re-)position itself in relation to the environment, by articulating issues of social justice and national identity, and subverting the traditional affiliation between nature, nation, and the law.

**AUDREY LOETSCHER** is a graduate of the University of Lausanne, and has been pursuing a PhD in American Studies at this institution since February 2016. Her areas of specialization are the environmental humanities, cultural studies, and critical theory. Thanks to a diversified curriculum, she has developed an interdisciplinary profile and her interests lie at the crossroads of disciplines ranging from continental philosophy to political economy and sociocultural anthropology. Her doctoral project interrogates the cultural causes of unsustainability in the U.S., and more specifically the relationship between dominant narratives underlying national identity and the unsustainable environmental discourse and practices that have accompanied its economic and cultural development.

**Cécile Heim -- Creating Belonging: Reading Law through Genre in Louise Erdrich’s The Round House**

This conference paper will be a thought experiment for the first chapter of my dissertation on law and genre: I would like to explore how the law and literary genres both create an economy of belonging and, more importantly, how Louise Erdrich’s *The Round House*
manages to subvert and transform this economy of belonging. This presentation will therefore be divided in two parts, where the first part will explore how the common characteristics of belonging in, on the one hand, the North American legal system and, on the other hand, the literary genre of crime fiction. This analysis will be based on the works of anti-colonial and Indigenous legal theorists David Theo Goldberg, John and Jean Comaroff, Wai Chee Dimock, Sara Deer (Muscogee Creek), and N. Bruce Duthu (Houma); in conjunction with genre theorists like Jacques Derrida, Stephen Knight, and John G. Cawelti. In other words, I am invested in exploring how genre and law both work through discourse and what kind of narrative of belonging they create. Finally, the second part will focus on how Louise Erdrich’s novel engages with law and genre in her 2012 novel *The Round House*. I will especially consider how the child-narrator functions in the re-imagination of notions of law and genre.

**CÉCILE HEIM** is a doctoral candidate at the University of Lausanne, Switzerland. Her PhD project focuses on re-imaginations of law, violence, and justice in Indigenous fiction and her research interests are Indigenous studies, de- and anti-colonial studies, feminist studies, critical legal studies, and critical ethnic studies. She has presented papers at international conferences, such as the annual meetings of the National Popular Culture and American Culture Association, the Northeastern Modern Language Association, the Critical Ethnic Studies Association, and the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association.

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**Panel A3: Transgressions in Genre**

**Morgane Ghilardi -- Playing (with) Horror: Video Games and the Deconstruction of Genre**

The taxonomy of video games is a complex affair that involves the consideration of perspective (e.g. first-person, isometric), the immediacy of action (e.g. turn based, real time), the affordances and exigencies of action and navigation (e.g. point-and-click, shooter, jump-and-run), as well as thematic genre (e.g. horror, fantasy, science fiction). As texts that create a very complex system of communication, video games are unique in their potential to create tension between the players’ expectations, the game’s affordances, and its demands of the player. In recent years, several critically-acclaimed US games have made use of this tension by presenting themselves as works of horror by means of their aesthetics, narratives, and mechanics, only to upend the player’s generic expectation in a climax of reversal. Looking at three games in particular – namely *Gone Home* (2013), *Firewatch* (2016), and *Night in the Woods* (2017) – this paper will explore the interplay between generic conventions of horror and their function in the telling of stories about transition and self-discovery. Whether it is the abandoned family home, Shoshone National Forest, or the decayed coal-mining community of Possum Springs, these distinctly American sites do not just echo economic, social, and personal anxieties, but become uncanny spaces of projection for the player’s imagination and expectations. Focusing on the meaning of genre in the particular context of ludic storytelling on the one hand, and considering the relevance of horror tropes and their dismantling for the telling of these American tales on the other, the aim will be to illustrate the deconstructive potential of video games.

**MORGANE A GHILARDI** holds a B.A. in English Literature and Linguistics, Hermeneutics, and Film Studies, as well as an M.A. in Gender Studies and English Literature from the
University of Zurich. She is a research and teaching assistant for Prof. Elisabeth Bronfen at UZH and is working on her doctoral dissertation titled “Do Androids Dream of Sex?”, which explores the representations of androids, cyborgs, and artificial intelligence across media, paying special attention to dichotomies of body and mind in relation to sex, gender, and power.

Sixta Quassdorf -- “I would prefer not to take a clerkship”: The Office Novel
The sub-genre of the office novel leads a niche existence (a surprising fact considering the ubiquity of offices). Nevertheless, some of the most intriguing narratives, like Melville’s “Bartleby, the Scrivener,” Heller’s Something Happened and Foster Wallace’s The Pale King are set in the office. Furthermore, as Mulhull (2016) has observed, in the last 20 years “the office novel has become a genre in its own right.” Kiesling (2016) concurs but notices that many of the new office novels are hidden behind labels like “‘chick lit,’ ‘girlfriend literature,’ or even ‘erotica’” because their authors are female.

Two aspects of this contested genre invite attention. On the one hand, since “Bartleby,” the office narrative has marked a painful counterpoint to the Western myth: instead of self-reliant virility, independence and an exploratory spirit, there is submission to ‘unmanly’, dull work and to the power of bureaucracy. On the other hand, the office has become an important place for women to search for independence and self-affirmation. However, this office freedom proves to be ambivalent and turns out to be just as mythical as the old promise of freedom in the West: the work regularly collides with the biological needs, social relationships and/or values of the female protagonists.

Although the specific anxieties represented in office literature differ, in part according to period and perspective, these narratives nevertheless share a further common element, beyond the office setting: a critical stance towards the status quo, in combination with an exploration of choices. Choices arise when the pressure for conformity ceases to be accepted, be it out of necessity or by conscious decision. The protagonists start to take their own values, dreams and desires seriously, which leads them to acts of refusal, sabotage and other forms of non-conformity. Thus, readers are again and again reminded of “Bartleby,” who keeps providing the subtext of the genre with his famous formula “I would prefer not to.”

SIXTA QUASSDORF studied English literature and linguistics, general linguistics, philosophy and computer science for the humanities at the University of Basel. After her graduation in 2006, she continued working for 10 years in several academic and administrative positions in Basel such as researcher with two SNF projects, university teacher, student advisor and study course coordinator. In 2016, Sixta successfully defended her PhD thesis and published her monograph: ‘A little more than kin’ - Quotations as a linguistic phenomenon. A study based on quotations from Shakespeare’s Hamlet. Since 2017, she has held a post-doc position at the University of St. Gallen. Her new research is dedicated to the representation of work in contemporary American literature. Furthermore, she is interested in the representation of alcohol in both American modernism and contemporary fiction.
Both Octavia E. Butler’s *Parable of the Sower* and Colson Whitehead’s *Zone One* are novels that explore a post-apocalyptic scenario in which North America has collapsed. These African American authors locate their narratives in the nation’s remaining safe-zones, the gated neighborhoods within cities in which the surviving characters attempt to thrive. Their settings, however, are progressively deconstructed by other(ed) dangerous strangers that perambulate, contaminating and, in the end, demolishing their refuge’s borders. Endangered and forced to face estrangement, each protagonist manages to call into question the prevailing system that governs the nation-state, encouraging the reader to reflect on biopolitics and ongoing racial discrimination. The purpose of this paper is thus to examine the narrative processes by which the national landscape gets gradually annihilated, demonstrating the authors’ allegorical intention of undoing those national codes that hierarchize individuals so as to reflect on the precariousness and vulnerability of contemporary minorities—for whom fundamental resources are already scarce nowadays. Both Butler’s and Whitehead’s narratives are thereby perceived as disruptive of their own genre, for they both overcome the post-apocalyptic novel’s desire to reinstall the previous order (or at least re-adapt society into a new hierarchical system) so as to offer a final rupture with the past and its attempts to be reproduced in the future. Thus, whereas Butler’s story overcomes systemic control by means of hyper-empathy toward posthuman individuals building a horizontal community, Whitehead’s fiction pursues absolute narrative closure, rejecting emotional memories, hope and deferral so as to accept one’s own defeat and consequent demise. In the face of dystopian adversity, both authors find very different mechanisms to transcend the genre’s limitations and, in doing so, they both renew post-apocalyptic fiction giving this mode a twofold purpose, that of denouncing the bare-life state of the oppressed while advising on the instability and dangers of hegemony and normative power structures.

**Paula Barba Guerrero** is a PhD student working under the supervision of Dr. Ana Mª Manzanas Calvo at the University of Salamanca. Her research interests include ethnic and postcolonial literature, postmodernism, memory, space, border and cultural studies. More specifically, her thesis examines the impact of memory, history and space in the configuration of identity as seen in contemporary African American literature. So far, she has taken part in national and international conferences, such as AEDEAN.

**Panel B1: Forms of Genre**

*James Dorson – Form vs. Genre*

One of the opening moves in Caroline Levine’s *Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network* (2015) is to distinguish form from genre. Unlike genres, which are always historically situated and contextually defined, she argues that forms are “abstract organizing principles” that “migrate across contexts in a way that genres cannot”. While this does not mean that forms operate in a social vacuum—in contrast, Levine emphasizes how various forms are mobilized and interact in different contexts—it does mean that Levine’s new formalism is open to the charge of reification: as transhistorical patterns or arrangements, forms exist prior to the social circumstances in which they are instantiated. This aprioristic
understanding of form generates a theory of aesthetic and political interaction in Levine’s account in which abstract principles of organization encounter each other in concrete situations. As her vocabulary describing these formal interactions suggests (“encounter,” “overlap,” “collide”), her formalism lacks an account of formal reflexivity and differentiation. Indeed, her concept of form relies on one of the forms she herself discusses: a bounded whole. Formal interaction, then, which for Levine is also political interaction, is not a process of differentiation and recursive change, but a rather static formal pluralism which fails to account for the relationality of forms. As generic differentiation has been one of the most productive concepts in genre theory in recent decades, where the form of genre is conceived as a kinship network rather than a bounded whole, this paper asks what *Forms* might learn from genres about reflexive differentiation. Rather than a pluralism of forms, it suggests that a pragmatism of forms that takes formal differentiation into account can provide a better model for understanding the interaction of forms.

**JAMES DORSON** is an Assistant Professor at the John F. Kennedy Institute for North American Studies, Freie Universität Berlin. He is the author of *Counternarrative Possibilities: Virgin Land, Homeland, and Cormac McCarthy’s Westerns* (2016) and the coeditor of two special journal issues: “Data Fiction: Naturalism, Narratives, and Numbers” (*Studies in American Naturalism*, 2017) and “Cormac McCarthy Between Worlds” (*European Journal of American Studies*, 2017). Among his publications are essays on David Foster Wallace, emotional labor, the genre turn in contemporary fiction, American literary naturalism, and US conservatism. His research interests include critical theory, labor fiction, and economic criticism. He is currently writing a book on naturalism and the spirits of capitalism at the turn of the twentieth century.

Thomas Austenfeld -- Pathos: The Genre of Poetic Address
The call for papers defines genre primarily as operating in "narrative patterns" that have shaped American self-consciousness or have served to legitimate American political interests. By contrast, I intend to show in my paper how the category of "pathos," long neglected in American poetry studies, can be interpreted as a genre that has decisively shaped American poetry from the Puritans to the present. Originally discussed in classical rhetorical theory—from Aristotle to Longinus—pathos served for centuries as the quintessential standard of effective poetry until World War One, when a skeptical age turned to irony as the dominant mood. Pathos is a form of speech that expresses, transports, and evokes emotion. American poets from Edward Taylor through Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman to e.e.cummings and Kim Addonizio have effectively employed pathetic speech (please permit yourself to hear this adjective as a neutral description!) to create lasting poetical statements. If, as Heather Dubrow asserted long ago, genre functions like a social code in that it describes the manner in which a text announces how it wants to be read, then a fresh examination of poetic genre will reveal that pathos is, at heart, the genre of poetic address. Pace Helen Vendler's assertion that "poetry is what we speak to ourselves," I want to read American poets addressing their God, their country, their lovers, their fellow citizens in a skillful display of pathos that joins American poetry with ancient rhetorical practice. The politics of pathos in poetry is not far behind: this form of poetic address gives expression to the emphatically emotional American self.

**THOMAS AUSTENFELD** is Professor of American Literature at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland. Austenfeld is the author of *American Women Writers and the Nazis: Ethics and Politics in Boyle, Porter, Stafford, and Hellman* (2001). He is the editor of *Kay Boyle for the*
Twenty-First Century (2008), of Critical Insights: Barbara Kingsolver (2010), and of Katherine Anne Porter’s Ship of Fools: New Interpretations and Transatlantic Contexts (2015). He is coeditor of Writing American Women (2009, SPELL 23) and Terrorism and Narrative Practice (2011). His articles have appeared in Mississippi Quarterly, Colloquium Helveticum, Prose Studies, South Atlantic Review, Pacific Coast Philology, Southwestern American Literature, Great Plains Quarterly and Anglia. Since 2013, he has been serving as Secretary General of IAUPE, the International Association of University Professors of English.

Tim Lanzendörfer -- Reading for Genre: Form, Politics, and Literary Criticism

My paper wants to build on work I have previously done to examine the question of genre’s potential as a tool of critical diagnosis and as a focal point of literary criticism. Recently, Caroline Levine has argued that we should expand “our usual definition of form in literary studies to include patterns of sociopolitical experience”; conversely, I want to argue that genre should be read itself as a pattern of sociopolitical relevance. Genre—especially in the context of the genre turn in so-called literary writing—beyond being a matter of literary form and a means of locating literature in the marketplace, is itself vested with contemporary socioeconomic meaning, registering processes of class alignment and efforts to establish practice spaces for literature that do not conform rigidly to older—critical, economic, and readerly—hierarchies of high/low distinctions. I will read Colson Whitehead’s immensely successful The Underground Railroad against this background. I will suggest that the merging of literary forms and genres which the novel undertakes—of neo-slave narrative and alternative history, of literary fiction and plot-driven genre novel—must be understood as a means of triangulation. I understand its genre-savviness as a way of connecting it to a variety of different readerships at once, permitting it to speak about its central interests—the relevance of slavery and the historical constitutedness of race—to a wider audience than previous examples of the neo-slave narrative form.

TIM LANZENDÖRFER is Assistant Professor (wiss. Mitarbeiter) at the Obama Institute for Transnational American Studies at the University of Mainz, Germany. His current research is on speculative fiction, history, and the production of hope in contemporary U.S. fiction. His most recent monograph is Books of the Dead: Reading the Zombie in Contemporary Fiction, forthcoming from University Press of Mississippi. He has also edited a collection on genre entitled The Poetics of Genre in the Contemporary Novel, with Lexington Books (2015).

Panel B2: Racialized Genre

Olga Thierback-McLean -- Shifting Meanings of Asianness in Cyberpunk Movies since the 1980s

Defined broadly as a genre concerned with the possibilities and dangers of technology and their impact on human consciousness, cyberpunk has been characterized by dystopian visions of hyper-capitalism, deindividualization and authoritarianism. Having come into existence in the historical context of Asia’s economic rise, cyberpunk – notably also in its cinematic form – has habitually drawn on Asian motifs to express Western anxieties about
the future of mass societies. While initially it was typically Japan that featured as the backdrop for cyberpunk narratives as a highly-technologized society dominated by collectivist values, the focus subsequently expanded, in tandem with real-life transformations in the political and economic power balance, to China and South Korea. However, it was not so much any distinctive culture of a specific Asian country but rather the idea of Asianness as such that captured the cyberpunk imagination. Its depictions vary from images of the omnipresent, yet separate other (Blade Runner, 1982); mysterious antagonist (Brazil, 1985); obscure sphere populated by inscrutable businessmen, crime syndicates, Anime characters and martial artists (Johnny Mnemonic, 1995); to positive interpretations as the source of empowering ancient knowledge (The Matrix Trilogy, 1999-2003); or origin of the opposition to corpocracy and the revival of egalitarian ideals in response to ruthless colonialism (Cloud Atlas, 2012). More than just providing a convenient setting for addressing technophobic fears or painting looming scenarios of sprawling megacities, rapacious consumption, overpopulation and environmental collapse, Asian imagery in cyberpunk movies – be it in the form of symbols, traditions, aesthetics or actual characters as representatives of their culture – has also mirrored differing Western perceptions of Asia. This paper explores the evolution of Asian tropes in cyberpunk films since the 1980s and its reciprocity to political sea changes and post-colonial critical discourses.

OLGA THIERBACH-MCLEAN studied North American literature, Russian literature, and musicology at the University of Hamburg and UC Berkeley. After completing her Master of Arts, she earned her doctorate in American Studies at the University of Hamburg. She is the author of two books on contemporary U.S. political culture, and in particular on the impact of Emersonian individualism on American discourses on personal rights, identity politics and social reform. She is also a recent contributor to Amerikastudien / American Studies Journal, The Irish Journal of American Studies, and U.S. Studies Online. Her main research interests are in the intellectual history of liberalism, American Transcendentalism, and on dystopian fiction. Her current research projects are focused on the significance of race in dystopian narratives, and on the cultural appropriation debate as an aspect of American political exceptionalism. Olga Thierbach-McLean works as a researcher, author and literary translator in Hamburg and Vancouver.

Keith Corson -- The Thing with Two Heads: Blaxploitation as Genre and/or Production Cycle

The contested term 'blaxploitation' has been alternately utilized as a genre, subgenre, sensibility, pejorative, and production cycle since its introduction in the early 1970s. For Variety, who coined the term, blaxploitation was simply a way to explain the surge of black-focused film production in Hollywood following the dual successes of Sweet Sweetback’s Baadasssss Song and Shaft in 1971. For civic organizations like the Coalition Against Blaxploitation the term was a rallying cry to communicate the supposed indignities and destructiveness of screen representations of blackness from 1972 to 1976. Since the decline in production of black-focused films at the end of 1976, however, blaxploitation is most often invoked as a genre, with narrative function as well as era, aesthetics, and the racial identity of main characters deemed to be understood simply by using the blaxploitation label. This paper will explore the ways in which thinking of blaxploitation as a genre both helps and hinders collective understanding of black-focused films from the 1970s and cinematic representations of race as a whole. Complicating my own previous arguments that blaxploitation is best understood as a production cycle, this paper moves to reconcile the complications and contradictions of a temporal definition by considering the validity of a
genre approach. Rather than an either/or proposition, blaxploitation calls for a more nuanced approach that incorporates elements of genre definition without being beholden to strict rules or out of hand exclusions.

**KEITH CORSON** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Film, Theatre, and Creative Writing at the University of Central Arkansas. He is the author of *Trying to Get Over: African American Directors After Blaxploitation, 1977-1986* (University of Texas Press, 2016) and the forthcoming monograph *ReFocus: The Films of Francis Veber* (Edinburgh University Press). He received his Ph.D. in Cinema Studies from New York University.

**Jiann-Chyng Tu -- Black American Romance: Berlin and the Postwar African American Novel**

This paper seeks to investigate the uses of romance as a genre, a form, and a mode of representation within postwar Black American fiction set in postwar Germany. Through contextualizing interactions and tension of postwar African American novels at the intersections of race, form, genre, and nation, I posit that African American novels set in postwar Germany adapt and appropriate the aesthetic modes and uses of Euro-American romance to articulate various lacks, fears, anxieties, and failures within a (trans-)national, Black Atlantic, and diasporic framework. In addition, I argue that earlier African American Romances, such as W.E.B. Du Bois’s 1928 romance *Dark Princess*, serves as a sort of generic and formal template for much of the African American novels set in post-WWII Germany. I critically read and situate Paul Beatty’s *Slumberland* (2009) and Darryl Pinckney’s *Black Deutschland* (2016) within the tradition of “American Romance(s)” and examine it alongside cultural and literary uses of romance as genre, form, and mode next to what I call the “cosmopolitan imaginary.” The romance is an often contested and hard to pinpoint genre that has much weight within American literature as an analytical tool for gauging the “national character as expressed in literature.” Along these lines, I argue that romance as a literary space and place, next to Germany/Berlin as a physical space and place, becomes a contested and necessary site for imagining and negotiating national belonging and citizenship for black American (male) expatriates. Furthermore, I argue that the works I examine in this paper strategically adapts aesthetic and generic modi operandi and modi vivendi of the romance to posit alternatives to Black America. Because of romance’s generic and formal elasticity, in a way, it signals a sense of freedom, liberation, and escape from the realities of the present. But romance, as Toni Morrison points out, is deeply implicated in and produced by heavily racialized tropes, and to depict the nature of race in US American literature, it is therefore necessary to return to the form that the literature takes. Finally, I argue that Beatty and Pinckney’s American romances inevitably writes postwar Germany into U.S. American discourses of blackness and “Americanness.”

**JIANN-CHYNG TU** is currently a doctoral candidate in North American Literature and Culture at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. He holds a B.A. in German and English from Wake Forest University and a M.A. in Amerikanistik from the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. Until September 2017, he was a lecturer in American Literature at the Englisches Seminar, Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster. His dissertation, tentatively titled “The Transnational Self and the Cosmopolitan Imaginary: Romance, Nation, and the Postwar African Novel in Germany, 1948-2016”, looks at the intersection of race, form, genre, and nation in African American novels set in postwar Germany. His research interests include postwar African American literature, the romance, theories of cosmopolitanisms, W.E.B. Du Bois, as well as theories of race, media, and technologies.
Panel B3: Gendered Spaces in Genres

Stella Castelli -- Transgressing Genres: Tarantino’s Kill Bill as a Reconfiguration of the Traditional Cooking Show

Notorious American television chef Julia Child’s seminal cooking show The French Chef, which premiered in 1963, celebrated an immediate success, flickering over American televisions for many years to come. The cooking show not only brought French culinary enrichment into the American domestic but also, at least partially, brought female violence into the domesticated, sheltered American household of the 1960s. Traditionally, female violence has been limited to the spatiality of the kitchen and the respective genre of the television cooking show. However, it appears that knife yielding women not only enjoy appeal but tell an adaptable tale that has the ability to bridge genres, as we find in a reconfiguration of the cooking show in Quentin Tarantino’s Kill Bill. The two films presented in the double featured tradition translate the visual documentation of the preparation of a meal into a revenge narrative which analogously employs the structure and genre of a television cooking show. Transgressing genres and re-writing the cooking show into a revenge narrative, Kill Bill offers highly aestheticized images – the film is a self-referential and conscious pastiche, a reinterpretation of numerous other films and their respective genres. The two films isolate vengeance as the proverbial dish which the protagonist is preparing and executing, gruesomely so and by means of satirically adhering to the domesticized female chef. Reconceptualizing the genre of the traditional cooking show into a revenge driven action film, then, not only opens room for a previously limited staging of domesticized female violence but also illustrates the interdependency of content and genre.

STELLA CASTELLI holds a BA in English Literature and Linguistics and Theory and History of Photography as well as an MA in English Literature and Linguistics from the University of Zurich. She wrote her MA thesis on “Aestheticized Representations of Death in American Literature and Film: Poe, Hitchcock, Craven,” exploring repressions of death and their symptomatic reappearance in contemporary American culture. She is currently working on her doctoral dissertation furthering her research within this field with a specific interest in the serial depiction of death.

Igor Maver -- Canadian Gender Experimentation with Genre: Margaret Atwood’s Retelling of the Penelope Myth in The Penelopiad

The presentation seeks to examine the gender relations and the empowerment of the female voice in Margaret Atwood’s The Penelopiad (2005) where she rewrites Homer’s The Odyssey from the perspective of Penelope. What genre does it belong to? In this regard the genre experimentation is specifically addressed through the gender lens of a classical myth rewritten as a novella. Loyalty within the oikos is discussed, since Odysseus's punishment of the unfaithful subjects is performed through bloody actions under Odysseus's orders in his palace. During his absence, twelve maids from among his fifty servants have shown disrespect to Penelope and their son, Telemachus, because the treacherous maids had become concubines of the Suitors, thus violating their oikos duty of sexual fidelity towards their patriarch and king. The question of violence in Odysseus's hanging of Penelope's servants, thus meant as setting an example to society, is given special attention in the essay and the reasons for this extremely severe punishment for their sexual 'betrayal' are speculated upon from the point of view of the gender distribution of social power. This
is the main theme of Atwood's rewriting of the ancient Greek myth along with her formal innovations, such as, for example, the introduction of the Greek chorus. Some of the recent modern versions of the Penelope myth are also briefly discussed.

**IGOR MAVER** is a Professor of English of the University of Ljubljana in Slovenia, where he teaches Shakespearian drama, Australian and Canadian literatures, and Anglophone post-colonial fiction. He is Head of the section for literature and Head of the Interdisciplinary American Studies Doctoral Program. He is an elected member of The Academy of Europe Academia Europaea in London and a member of the international executive board of the International Association of University Professors of English.

## Panel C1: Generating Space and History

**Simon Krause -- Playing History in Video Games: The Historicity of Assassin's Creed III**

When it comes to narratives from various media that are based on historical events, one issue that is often discussed is their historicity. Blending elements of science fiction, actual and invented history and mythology, the stories of the millennia-long struggle between Templars and Assassins told by the *Assassin's Creed* series of video games are a prime candidate for such an analysis. *Assassin's Creed III* delves into the times of the Revolutionary War. In its narrative, it includes – similar to previous entries in the series – prominent figures from the era such as George Washington, Charles Lee and Benjamin Franklin. Additionally, the (fictitious) player character is afforded a key role in the events that shape the American Republic. *Assassin's Creed III* thus offers an experienceable gateway into the past, having the player take part in historical events, appropriating them while also taking certain liberties with established facts where it is deemed fit – most noticeably, on which side of the fictional Templar-Assassin conflict these historical figures stand and how the player character influences events. This paper thus aims at investigating the degrees to which American history is reproduced, appropriated and commented upon. While the game offers a mostly accurate version of events, significant changes are made to accommodate for the series-specific lore and the inclusion of the player character. It uses these findings as a jump-off point to discuss further issues of historicity specific to video games regarding ongoing debates about the status among other media in general and, more specifically, their unique opportunities in audience identification and storytelling.

**SIMON KRAUSE** is a Master student of British and North American Cultural Studies at the University of Freiburg, where he previously obtained a Bachelor’s degree in English & American Studies and History. He is also a Research Assistant at the English Seminar of the university. His research interests include Victorian periodicals, digital culture, films, television and video games, with a particular emphasis on works that challenge established theories, genre or franchise conventions. His most recent term paper for the course “Reflections on Digital Culture in Literature and TV” examined the representation of artificial intelligence in the Mass Effect video game franchise, while his upcoming Master’s thesis will examine the new image(s) of the British Royal Family in the press, social media and recent film and television works.
Malgorzata Socha -- Genre Revisited: A Revisionist Approach to the Western
When transferred to literary and film studies, the concept of revisionism becomes rather hard to grasp critically: films and novels are not frequently explicitly informed by certain theories and only occasionally form schools of thought. Even more problematic is the fact that, given a more flexible model of genre, it turns into a category which is not made up of a prescriptive set of rules, but rather constitutes an open categorization changing over time as the texts which define the genre change.

Revisionist texts offer solutions targeted at altering the genre they depend on to be fully understandable and are written against older trends and ideologies, going above and beyond what non-revisionist texts do in scope and intent. Revisionist Westerns actively engage in questioning and revising or laying open the ideological areas of the generic code that constitutes the genre they partake in, a code negotiated in culturally dominant earlier instances of the form. Such Westerns frequently partake in postmodernism’s larger effort to probe and challenge established patterns and societal convictions.

The paper will be an attempt at presenting how the concept of revisionism is seen through the lens of the Western genre and to what extent it changes Western film and novel. Examples displaying in detail how revisionism works in the Western will be provided. Additionally, the Western’s revisionist counter-tradition is going to be addressed. It will be argued that, although much of revisionism falls into the period of cultural postmodernism, there are revisionist texts before the advent of postmodernism. Uncovering a history of revisionist Westerns, which is almost as old as the genre itself is intended to highlight the conclusion that revisionism is a mode of writing rather than the last step in the evolution of a genre as which it has often been regarded, even though revisionism as a dominant cultural approach only fully arrives in the 1960s.

MALGORZATA SOCHA holds an MA degree in English Philology obtained at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland. Due to her deep interest in literatures of the English-speaking countries she followed two specialization paths during the course of studies: British Literature and American Studies. Her knowledge of British and American literature was broadened further during a year-long stay in Boston, MA, USA as she was awarded a joint university scholarship to study at Boston College and Harvard. For many years she has been working as an academic teacher of English for Specific Purposes at the Jagiellonian University Medical College in Kraków. She has presented papers at three international conferences so far. Currently she is working as a freelance translator and began her PhD in the fall 2018. Her literary interests focus on the 20th century British and American literature and has recently evolved toward writings of Indigenous Nations of North America and the question of form.

Ridvan Askin -- Absolute Form: Traveling the “great outdoors” in Margaret Fuller’s Summer on the Lakes, in 1843.
That travel narratives such as Fuller’s Summer on the Lakes, in 1843 should provide us with a rich testing ground for the relation between narrative and space seems natural. That they should also present us with what French philosopher Quentin Meillassoux has ventured to call “the great outdoors” might sound more contentious. The great outdoors is but another term for the more traditional philosophical notion of the absolute. It is, however, no coincidence that Meillassoux introduces the absolute in spatial terms. After all, the absolute is precisely that which exceeds the particular, the concrete, and the relative, opening up another space beyond any and every given space, including the space of reason—it is not just outdoors, it is the great outdoors, absolutely outside and alien. As such, the absolute is
fundamentally inexperienceable and unrepresentable. At the same time, it cannot be a realm just unto itself as that would make it a realm relative to our realm of experience and representation: the absolute has to be absolutely outside while at the same time permeating and saturating our experiential and representational world, in which it merely registers as that alien force of the inexperienceable and unrepresentable. Fuller’s account of her travels in the Great Lakes region makes the registration of this alien force explicit, indirectly unveiling that wholly other realm of the absolute.

The text is disjointed, impressionistic, and fragmented, including illustrations, poems, a fictionalized autobiographical sketch, and a retelling and part-translation of a German esoteric narrative that is itself the imaginatively embellished retelling of the life and death of Friederike Hauffe, the so-called Seeress of Prevorst. These formal interventions serve to perform displacements of experiential space on at least three levels: First, the many digressions seemingly unrelated to Fuller’s actual travel itinerary included in the travelogue interrupt and break up Fuller’s account of frontier life and the external, physical space of the American West. Second, the focus on Hauffe’s esoteric, spiritual powers and her somnambulism serves to unsettle the internal space of reason and thought. Third, these displacements are precisely enacted by means of breaking up the very space of narrative form itself—they interfere with and disrupt the main narrative and its narrative flow. Conjointly, these strategies serve to make tangible the otherwise intangible realm of the great outdoors or absolute. Such a feat, I believe, has repercussions for the narratological apparatus and terminology dealing with the relation of narrative form and space. I will suggest the concept of pseudo-paraleptic anamorphosis to account for such attempts to narrate the great outdoors.

RIDVAN ASKIN is Postdoctoral Teaching and Research Fellow in American and General Literatures at the University of Basel. He is the author of Narrative and Becoming (EUP 2016) and the co-editor of The Aesthetics, Poetics, and Rhetoric of Soccer (Routledge 2018), Literature, Ethics, Morality: American Studies Perspectives (Narr 2015), and a special issue of Speculations on Aesthetics in the 21st Century (2014). Currently, he is working on his second book, tentatively entitled “Transcendental Poetics and the Futures of American Romanticism.”

Panel C2: Submission/Subversion: Challenging Gender Images through Genre

Nasrin Babakhani --

A New Face of Realism: An Other Thinking from Marginalized Position

Magical Realism, once a liberating style to map alternative epistemologies and put non-European writing on the map, seems to have degenerated in the public eye into a catchphrase opportunistically deployed to put writers on the market. However, my study is founded on the argument that magical realism is a means of voicing difference rather than a sign of cultural homogeneity. This study concentrates on Toni Morrison’s Beloved and Gloria Naylor’s Mama Day from African American cultural context, and I will try to interpret the magic in these magical realist texts culturally. I use the term ‘cultural realism’ instead of magical realism because I think what has been called magical can be interpreted through the authors’ original cultural belief systems as meaning something else. The dominant
culture has labelled some aspects of African American culture magical and supernatural in order to ignore or devalue them. However, I will argue that Morrison and Naylor do not create a supernatural or fantastic effect, but write from particular cultural perspectives. They challenge dominant conceptions of reality without sacrificing the claim to be true to experience.

Basing my reading on the theories of bell hooks and Patricia Hill Collins, whose criticisms focus on rearticulating the consciousness of Black women, I show how cultural realism uses magic to resist dominant Western narratives. In their essays, they have attempted to direct our attention to the power of African American women within their Afrocentric conceptualization of community that encourages them to resist race, gender, and class oppressions. Consequently, I will show how these two women writers, Morrison and Naylor, illustrate the female protagonists’ struggle for self-definition under conditions of cultural and patriarchal oppression and marginalization. I will also reveal that their texts present the opportunities for survival, emancipation, and a rebellion against female victimization by questioning the old pattern of objectification, bestialization, and the images of Black women’s subordination under slavery and afterwards.

NASRIN BABAKHANI is a PhD candidate in Georg-August-University Goettingen, Department of North American Studies. She attended Azad University of Tabriz where she obtained an M.A. in English language and literature in 2010. Currently, she is working under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Andrew S. Gross and Prof. Dr. MaryAnn Snyder-Körber. Since 2016, she has been a member of the research group “Multiple Modernities” at GSGG in Germany. She is particularly interested in cross-culturalism, magical realism, post-colonialism, and realism.

Maria Lombard -- Genre and Women’s Narratives of Motherhood in Contemporary American Literature

American literature has long had a love-hate relationship with motherhood, from fictional burdened accounts of Edna Pontellier in Kate Chopin’s The Awakening, or dystopic motherhood in Atwood’s The Handmaid’s Tale, to Adrienne Rich’s more exploratory questioning of motherhood in Of Woman Born. The complex accounts of motherhood in American literature cover the genres of poetry, memoir, short story, and novel. This presentation will explore contemporary first-hand narratives of motherhood that challenge and complicate cultural representations of motherhood.

Creative non-fiction narratives of motherhood such as Argonauts and Little Labors are subversive texts telling the stories of unconventional mother characters. As postmodern accounts, these books represent a genre of creative non-fiction that less blames motherhood for the mother’s situation, than it attempts to reconcile the subversive possibilities of motherhood. In Little Labors, Rivka Galchen refers to her child as “the puma,” an affectionate enough term, though one that decenters the relationship and offers readers the opportunity to see the mother-child relationship as social construction that can be reimagined for a postmodern world. This reimagining of motherhood is also reflected in Argonauts, as the author Maggie Nelson explores her pregnancy at the same time as her partner undergoes a sex-change operation. These two transformations together, exploring gender, motherhood, parenthood, and a postmodern counter-narrative of choice, sharply contrasts earlier accounts of motherhood in American literature.

This presentation will ultimately show how postmodern feminist authors use the genre of narrative to explore motherhood outside of the older literary canon which often
situates motherhood as a personal and social burden. The presentation hopes to open a conversation about how American women’s literature might be imagining a more equitable future for the treatment of motherhood, inclusive of women’s and queer narrative forms.

**MARIA LOMBARD** is an Assistant Professor in Residence at Northwestern University in Qatar. She teaches First Year Writing and Travel Literature. Her research interests focus on writing pedagogy, student motivation, and women’s and minority voices.

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Yuwei Ge -- Dancing with the Wolves: Women’s Images and Fairy Tales in American Political Television Series

In his *Irresistible Fairy Tale: The Cultural and Social History of a Genre*, Jack Zipe mentions that, as a genre of storytelling based on social life, the fairy tale has “evolved into both an elaborate and simple narrative” by showing relevance to various cultural representations and historical transformations as a result of its hybrid nature on the one hand, and developing into a crystallization of a simple and classic formation of literary art on the other. Therefore, fairy tales are where cultural symbols and values have rooted, developed, and been innovated. Accordingly, the representation of women in fairy tales and their revival in other genres of popular culture have introduced the transforming cultural images of women in terms of social taboos, gender stereotypes, and changing social perceptions. The present paper aims to investigate the representations of women politicians and lawyers in two recent American political television series—*The Good Wife* and *House of Cards*—with regard to their references to some traditional Western fairy tales. The analysis will be divided into two parts. The first part will be focused on the stereotypical interpretations of women’s images in fairy tales and some of their negative cultural influences on the representations of women in North American popular culture. The second part deals with the evolutionary development of women’s images from the original conceptions offered by fairy tales to the innovated interpretations in contemporary American political television series. Eventually, this paper will discuss the repurposing of the cultural symbols produced by some fairy tales in recent cultural products and reach some conclusions on how these fairy tales have provided significant inspirations of symbols, such as princesses, virgins, and witches, for the characterization of female characters as a way to tackle problems such as gender inequality and social injustice.

**YUWEI GE** is currently a doctoral candidate in Philipps-Universität Marburg (Marburg is a university city where die Brüder Grimm lived and studied). Her doctoral project is focused on women and political leadership in the United States, and her research interests include gender studies, American politics, and media studies. She has presented her papers on the cultural representations of women and leadership at national and international conferences organized by The Oxford Research Center for Humanities, the Association for Art History, the German Association for American Studies, the Nordic Association for American Studies, the Atlantische Akademie, and the International Association of Inter-American Studies. Her paper and reviews are published respectively in *Gender Forum* and *American Studies Journal of GAAS*. 
Panel D1: Performing Genres, Performing Identities

Boris Vejdovsky – The Performance of the Western Genre in American Culture:
Rhetoric and Symbolic Forms in American Western Movies

The Western has been often read as a quintessentially American form of popular art, a genre that has expressed over the decades the moods and anxieties of the nation. While many studies have shown that the Western metonymically expresses the social, political, racial and sexual tensions of the nation, relatively little attention has been paid to its forms. In other words, many critics have paid attention to what the Western says, but not so much to how it does it; while it is always dangerous to seek to oppose form and content, this paper does not focus on the semantics of the Western, but on its rhetoric and prosody. By referring to the vocabulary of Erwin Panofsky (The Perspective as Symbolic Form) this paper proposes that the Western establishes symbolic forms that have had a performative effect in shaping American culture well beyond the circle of moviegoers. By further drawing on the work of Jacques Derrida (Of Grammatology), but also Judith Butler (Bodies the Matter, Excitable Speech), this paper proposes that the symbolic forms put in place by the Western not only operate performatively in American popular culture, but that they also participate in the way this culture has had a political impact on our contemporary world. The paper will show how, in the vocabulary of Roberto Esposito, that these symbolic forms create a sense of community and of immunity for the nation and beyond. This essay also seeks to show that the Western genre is paradigmatic for popular American culture where the actual performance of the culture is not in what the culture says, its semantics, but in what it does, namely its rhetoric and its prosody. This point finally leads the essay to a reflection on the role of American studies and on their responsibility to focus on the prosodic and performative aspects of American culture.

BORIS VEJDOVSKY, Ph.D., is Senior Lecturer (Maître d’enseignement et de Recherche I) at the University of Lausanne (UNIL), where he teaches American literature and American studies. As co-director of the “New American Studies” program, his teaching and research focus on aesthetic, ethical, and political cultural formations of the U.S., the American world and its global influence. His publications include articles on American authors such as Cotton Mather, Herman Melville, Wallace Stevens, Tony Kushner, Ernest Hemingway and Elizabeth Bishop, among others. He is the author of Ideas of Order: Ethics and Topos in American Literature (2009) and of Ernest Hemingway, la vie, et ailleurs (2011). He is also the editor of several collections of essays and the General Editor of the series Transatlantic Aesthetics and Culture (Peter Lang) that has published eight volumes to date. His current research project is titled “Framing the American West”; it explores the aesthetic and political formation of the landscapes of the American West and their political significance.

Anne Korfmacher – “I can tell an Indian when I see one”: Deconstructing “Indianness” in Der Schuh des Manitu and Green Grass, Running Water

The history of Native American representation in (mainstream) media is, unfortunately, predicated on a marked essentialism which is reflected in this paper’s title quote from Thomas King’s novel Green Grass, Running Water. The stereotypes emanating from such generalizations tend to fundamentally reduce a diverse and culturally heterogeneous group of people to a homogenous cliché which is reiterated and reaffirmed in most Western canonical texts. These “misrepresentations of ‘Indianness’” unite transnational writing traditions and have dominated not only the portrayal of Native Americans on the US-American commercial market but very noticeably also characterize the German cultural
landscape since the nineteenth century. There is, however, also a growing awareness for and an active subversion of these misrepresentations in both contexts, e.g. by Native American writer Thomas King (Cherokee, Greek and German descent) and German film-maker Michael ‘Bully’ Herbig. Both artists contribute to the discourse of Native representation, using different media and addressing distinct audiences. Yet, both rely on parodic strategies to confront and ultimately destabilize clichéd ways of thinking about Native Americans in literature and film. Considering the continuing presence of stereotypical depictions of Native Americans in both US-American and German cultural products of all kinds, this paper’s relevance is grounded in the need to better understand how effective parody can be in order to oppose harmful notions of an Indian ‘essence’. This paper, thus, poses the question in how far Thomas King’s novel Green Grass, Running Water (1994) and Michael Herbig’s film Der Schuh des Manitu (2001) respectively re-negotiate the representation of Native Americans by appropriating and parodying stereotypical depictions of ‘Indianness’ from canonical texts by Karl May and James Fenimore Cooper.

ANNE KORFMACHER is a second-year postgraduate student of “British and North American Cultural Studies” at the University of Freiburg in Breisgau, Germany, where she also received her undergraduate degree in English and American studies and educational management from 2013-2016. She has studied abroad both at the University of Sheffield (England) in 2015-2016 and at Helsingin Yliopisto (University of Helsinki, Finland) in 2017. In summer 2017 she also participated in the annual Research Society for Victorian Periodicals (RSVP) conference, chairing a panel on Victorian Fashion and she presented a paper on post-feminism in the popular podcast My Dad Wrote a Porno at a conference on “Negotiating Gender in Popular Culture” in Münster in January of this year. She is also currently organizing a student conference on “Alterity in Fantasy and Science Fiction” which will take place in Freiburg (Germany) in October 2018.

Julia Ditter -- The Evolution of the Sitcom: A Case Study of Brooklyn Nine-Nine and One Day at a Time

The long-standing activist credo that the personal is political can be located at the heart of the traditional sitcom which, even though focused on interpersonal relationships and personal struggles takes part in culturally and historically-specific ideological struggles. Nevertheless, the sitcom has long been perceived as a genre that lacks social worth because it focuses on comedy and the 'trivial' rather than taking an active political stance and promoting social justice. Recent sitcoms therefore aim to reinvent the 'traditional' format in ways that may allow the sitcom to achieve the status of 'quality television'. Thus, the Fox series Brooklyn Nine-Nine (2013–) at the same time retains some elements of the ‘traditional’ sitcom (such as the single-camera shooting style) and omits others (such as the laugh track). In contrast to Brooklyn Nine-Nine, which partly disguises its sitcom character through the work-place setting and the tradition of the police procedural, Netflix's reboot version of One Day at a Time (2017–) follows the sitcom tradition more visibly. In this paper, I will compare the two series with respect to their sitcom character and the kinds of humor that are used both to subvert typical sitcom stereotypes (such as the angry black man or the sexy Latina) and to highlight the hegemonic structure of interpersonal relationships. Thus, even though they can be formally and textually categorized as sitcoms, both series display an active political stance in favor of liberal left-wing politics. By taking this stance, they demonstrate that the sitcom genre is not inherently apolitical but does indeed constitute itself as a hegemonic site of struggle and lends itself even to explicit forms of expressing political views.
**JULIA DITTER** studied English and American Studies and Spanish at the University of Freiburg (Germany), Sevilla and Aberdeen. She is a Master's student in British and North American Cultural Studies at the University of Freiburg (Germany) and works as a Research Assistant at the English Department as well as in the D15 project “The Heroic in 21st Century British Television Series” (CRC 948). She co-presented a paper on *Doctor Strange* at the conference “Heroism as a Global Phenomenon in Popular Culture” (Freiburg, September 2017), a paper on heroism in Hulu's *The Handmaid's Tale* at the student conference "Pop Hero and Action Princess: Negotiating Gender in Popular Culture" (Münster, January 2018) and on animal alterity in Sarah Hall's *Mrs Fox* at the workshop "Border Experiences: The English Short Story in the 21st Century" (Freiburg, February 2018). She is currently co-organising the student conference "Exploring Alterity in Fantasy and Science Fiction" (Freiburg, Germany, October 2018).

**Panel D2: The Socio-Cultural Leverage of Genre**

**Amina Grunewald -- Visualizing Non-Speciesist Protest - Jo-Anne McArthur’s Photo-Documents as Narratives of Animal Advocacy and Means of Resistance**

Susan Sontag’s collections of essays *On Photography* (1977) and especially *Regarding the Pain of Others* (2004) focus on the aesthetic and moral dimensions of the format of photographed images. Photography is a way of coming to terms with present realities visually narrated. Roland Barthes maintained that photographs can serve as testimony, be subversive, and arouse sympathy with endless narrative frameworks behind and beyond a photograph. Employing the concept of speciesism this paper shines a light on Canadian Jo-Anne McArthur’s photo-journalism documenting the power of human exceptionalism by visualizing the invisible in factory farming, fur farming, laboratories, the entertainment sector, and the food industry in North America and beyond. Her photographs have become instrumental in creating counter-publics within the Anthropocene. Her works on animals are captured in two books, *We Animals* (2014), and *Captive* (2017), as well as in the 2013 documentary film *The Ghosts in Our Machine*. Stirring ethical concern and empathy, photography is indeed the medium that is the message. The closer one looks at McArthur’s visual testimonies, the more complex and suggestive they become when meeting the animal’s gaze or witnessing the prison-spaces animals are confined to. How does McArthur work with this visual format? How does photo-journalism as a format of power generate an ethical impact on the beholder? How does she work on our perception of a sentient animal captured in many forms (photo-framed, imprisoned, caught and tight up)? McArthur powerfully expands the boundaries of a (post-)human community to include the socio-political questions of eco-libertarian justice.

**AMINA GRUNEWALD** attended Philipps-Universität Marburg, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, and Goldsmiths, University of London. She received an M.A. degree in English/American Studies, French Studies, and Educational Studies, and obtained her PhD on Native self-representations in the works of Sherman Alexie at HU Berlin. Related PhD projects encompassed a research stay in Vancouver, Canada on community-based representations of First Nations in Canadian museum and gallery spaces, funded by Fritz Thyssen Stiftung. Amina was subsequently a visiting research fellow at Goldsmiths, University of London to investigate modes of communicating Indigenous knowledge. Next,
she was integrated as a PhD research fellow at CEREV/Concordia University, Montreal, to investigate Indigenous trauma narratives, Native epistemologies and potential transferability to (non-)Native audiences, for which she received the Jürgen Saße Förderpreis (Gesellschaft für Kanadastudien). Various poster and paper contributions, two seminars, and publications were produced as the outcome of these research stays. Her subsequent postdoctoral studies focus on literary and visual representations that thematize deep ecology, alterNative ethics and ontologies in American literatures and cultures, with broadening her horizon on anthrozoology, critical animal studies, critical museum studies, jazz studies and contemporary Native North American visual arts.

Rebekka Nordmann -- The American Short Story: A Genre of Influence?
The 19th century brought about expansion and battle in America, not only in the country, but also in the field of literature and periodical publishing. Prominent writers including Irving, Hawthorne, Melville, and Poe all contributed to the development of the short story, setting in motion a process that shifted the romantic novel into shorter and more diverse literary texts. However, the rise of the short story would not have been possible without the coincidental rise and spread of the magazine. The synergy of magazines and the short story genre meant that, towards the mid 19th-century, manageable short literature was accessible all over the country, including the newly founded states and western territories. Magazines gave writers a platform to publish short pieces of their work, opening a new field of occupation, while readers all over America could easily obtain the entertaining but also socio-critical writings.

This paper will present a pair of early profiteers of this synergy. Fitz-James O’Brien continued his Irish/English publishing career, writing detailed and fantastic short stories, publishing in major New York magazines in order to support his lavish lifestyle. His work alone displays the versatility the short story genre offers, allowing authors to explore different genres of the short story. Louisa May Alcott wrote a series of Civil War short stories based on her brief stint as a nurse at a Union hospital and published them in various magazines after her return home. Her tales provide a critically abolitionist voice during the War. With their writing, both O’Brien and Alcott contributed to the fortification of the short story as a socio-critical, wide-spread and approachable form of literature, ideally positioned to influence and inspire readers. However, critics of the genre have never been quiet, neither then nor now, constantly questioning its credibility, as well as the effort of its writers.

REBEKKA NORDMANN is a PhD student at the University of Zurich, Switzerland. She is writing her dissertation on the works of Fitz-James O’Brien and his role in the literary scene of mid-19th century of New York City. Rebekka holds both a BA (2015) and an MA (2017) in English Linguistics and Literature and History from the University of Zurich. Her MA thesis focused on reading the frontier not only as a geographical movement, but also as a social movement that still influences American society today. Research interests include 19th- and 20th-century American literature, relations between myth and society, and frontier and Civil-War literature.

Hannah Schoch -- Staging a Double Revolution: Hamilton’s Tactical Engagement of Genre
Lin-Manuel Miranda’s musical Hamilton (2015) uses genre explicitly to strategically manage its reception and its cultural impact. Accordingly, one of the musical’s key claims is that we
are witnessing a double revolution: The musical offers us not only the retelling of the American Revolution of 1776, but also a post-millennial aesthetic revolution. Hence, the claim is not only that Miranda’s blending of rap and musical allegedly propels the American musical into the 21st century and updates the genre for a whole new audience and for generations to come, but also that the aesthetic engagement of different genres allows us to experience the recounting of the historical revolution even more acutely.

Not only have the producers been highly prolific in putting out paratexts to both frame, control and produce a specific reading, these texts at the same time offer an explicit and self-conscious staging and a meta-reflection on what it means to engage genre tactically and strategically – which, while to some extent producing ideological readings, simultaneously destabilizes exactly these readings. Furthermore, its practice of reconfiguring the possibilities and potentialities of the musical genre did not follow a pre-tested script, and hence was both risky in terms of its production and reception, and based on a number of uncontrollable contingencies, not least of all because the two key genres invoked feed off of the visceral, not fully controllable moment on stage.

Accordingly, this paper will look at Hamilton’s practice of genre reconfiguration and its engagement of genre as tactics of self-positioning in order to highlight the intricate interconnectedness of history, politics, and art that can be traced via genre, but also in order to work out the paradox between the fraught, contingent moments of any aesthetic object and the seemingly stable, smooth discourses that can be produced in hindsight.

HANNAH SCHOCH, MA, is a Teaching and Research Assistant at the English Department, University of Zurich, and a member of the DFG network “Genres and Media”. She is currently completing her PhD entitled “Intimate Politics: The Couple and the American Democratic Project.” Furthermore, she has edited a collection of essays on Ida Lupino together with Elisabeth Bronfen and Ivo Ritzer, Ida Lupino: Die zwei Seiten der Kamera (Bertz und Fischer, 2018). Her research interests include questions of gender, genre and media, especially in regard to the American cultural imaginary in literature, film and television, and the intersection of literature, cultural theory and political philosophy.

Panel D3: Genres of “Race”: Science Fiction and Racecraft

Jesse Ramirez -- Are Orcs Racist? Reflections on Bright
The American entertainment company Netflix recently released its first attempt at a big-budget blockbuster, Bright. On the one hand, the film is a cop buddy movie starring Will Smith, whom one scholar has dubbed the first black science fiction superstar, and Joel Edgerton. The twist is that Edgerton’s character is an orc. While Bright is set in contemporary Los Angeles, this LA overlaps with the fantasy universe of Lord of the Rings, complete with orcs, elves, fairies, and magical powers. On the other hand, the film can be viewed as an example of science fiction’s alternate history subgenre, since the events of the Lord of the Rings franchise are treated as real historical events that shape the racial and class dynamics of LA. Although Bright has been panned by critics, I will present the film as a valuable lesson in American racecraft. The film is obviously intended as an allegory of racial oppression: the orcs are a ghettoized racial underclass in LA, while Edgerton’s character struggles against racial discrimination at the hands of his fellow cops. But I claim that Bright’s true interest lies in the mostly unmarked and taken-for-granted representational strategies with which the film constructs the biological differences among orcs, elves, and
humans, who are themselves variously coded as racially white, black, and Mexican. In order to flesh out director David Ayer’s racial imaginary, I also briefly compare *Bright’s* racecraft to Ayer’s representations of blacks and Latinos in *Training Day*. Ultimately, I aim to show how *Bright* elucidates the ways in which fantasy and pseudoscience combine to produce the science-fictionality of “race.”

**JESSE RAMIREZ** graduated from the Program in American Studies at Yale University and is Assistant Professor (Assistenzprofessor) of American Studies at the University of St Gallen. He is currently completing *Un-American 4 Dreams*, a book on apocalyptic science fiction and utopia. For more info, visit jjesseramirez.com.

**Christine Vogt-William** -- “My Skin Is Not My Own”: Twinned Bodies and Racecraft in Frank Herbert’s *Dune*

Beliefs and attitudes pertaining to race are thematized in science fiction texts using paradigms of the alien, the monster, and the non-human. Often such figures are also aligned with notions of uncanny and inexplicable forces (i.e., ‘witchcraft’). In the primary world, while strenuous efforts are engaged in to debunk extant biologically deterministic readings of race through phenotypical features, the construct of race still holds currency in primary world interactions and relationalities. Naturally, depending on perspective, one pays attention to why such efforts are made and to what end. Primary world understandings and ways of “doing race”—i.e., racecraft—resonate significantly with the uncanniness and inexplicability of the valency of race. In science fiction and fantasy literary secondary worlds, the intricacies of such uncanniness, can be read as forms of postcolonial haunting contingent on treatments of subjugated and marginalized peoples as often refracted through figures that are read using frames of cultural Othering and monsterization, while rendering racialisation a frustratingly ambivalent exercise. The third and fourth volumes of Frank Herbert’s *Dune* septology offer just such intriguing templates to consider racecraft, racialisation, family bonds, religious myth and imperial colonial politics. *Children of Dune* (1976) and *God Emperor of Dune* (1977) mobilize the tropes of colonization at planetary levels, while exploring (both at individual and communal contexts), the effects of religion, genetics and genealogy, memory and history in constructing societies through intriguing manipulations of power in a dystopic universe 10,000 years into our earth’s future. The feudal relations between the planets Caladan and Arrakis (Dune) as well as other planetary societies in a galactic cluster resembling contemporary human societies are presented through the focal perspectives of fraternal opposite-sex twins Leto II and Ghanima Atreides. These twins are heirs to their father’s messianic and political legacies through the monopoly on the spice mélange (necessary in the establishment of religious authority, space travel and economic systems) produced by the sandworms of the desert planet called Dune. Leto and Ghanima are of mixed race heritage (their father Paul Atreides was from the planet Caladan, while their mother Chani Kynes was an indigenous Fremen woman) and are double heirs to the imperial galactic throne. Besides this, they also possess supernatural powers of prescience acquired in utero; the twins have innumerable ancestral memories and personalities at their disposal thus making them embodied historical archives – and supplementing their intrinsic uncanniness as twinned bodies. In light of the despotic political struggles for the spice monopoly, Leto makes a momentous decision to insert himself into the spice eco-cycle which requires him to give up his humanity, while complicating understandings of life and death, culture and politics, history and memory on metaphysical planes. The twins’ Fremen heritage is a racialised indigenous context that allows Leto to commit himself to a symbiotic metamorphosis that affects Fremen religious beliefs, intergalactic power structures, as well
as the spice economy. These twin bodies function as spaces that realign readings of race, gender, class, religion, history and bodies, by offering an intersectional nexus of sites reflecting on how societies are structured using the mechanics of ‘racecraft’.

CHRISTINE VOGT-WILLIAM is originally from Singapore and studied English, German and Psychology at the University of Essen, Germany. She completed her doctoral thesis at the Centre for Women’s Studies at the University of York, England as a Marie Curie Gender Graduate Fellow. Besides publications on South Asian diasporic literature from the US, Canada, England and the Caribbean, she is co-editor of Disturbing Bodies (2008), an essay collection on artistic and literary representations of deviant bodies. She is also the author of Bridges, Borders and Bodies: Transgressive Transculturality in Contemporary South Asian Diasporic Women’s Novels (2014). Vogt-William was a Visiting Scholar at the Department of Women’s Studies at Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia, USA from 2008 to 2010. On returning to Germany, she taught in the Postcolonial and Media Studies Department at the University of Münster, as well as in the North American Studies department at the University of Freiburg. Vogt-William was Interim Professor for Postcolonial and Gender Studies at the English and American Studies Department, Humboldt University, Berlin from April 2014 to March 2017, where she taught literary and cultural studies. She is currently working on her second book on biological twinship in Anglophone literatures and has adjunct status at the universities of Erlangen and Augsburg.

Bryan Banker -- Earthers, Dusters, Belters: The Politics of Race and Class in Syfy’s The Expanse

The Expanse, Syfy Network’s acclaimed new television series, depicts a future in which humans have colonized much of the Solar System. Earth and Mars are competing superpowers that maintain a tense alliance in order to continue to dominate the resources and people in the Asteroid Belt, known as “Belters.” Belters have lived and worked in hostile conditions for many generations, which has greatly altered their anatomy. One major narrative in The Expanse is the crafting of the Belters’ “race” along physiological and class lines to organize and manage them into submissive worker categories. This form of racecraft, as Karen Fields and Barbara Fields argue, mirrors how “race” is manufactured along illusionary biological lines by ruling classes to divide and weaken those whom they suppress. Following the Fieldses’ contention that racism and class inequality are a part of the same phenomenon, this paper mines the intertwining race and class conflict in the television show to help understand the connection of race and class in contemporary American society and politics. If much of science fiction offers narratives that are veiled socio-political metaphors of pressing current issues, studying television shows such as The Expanse can produce speculative counterimpulses to persistent socio-political subjects. As storylines in the television show reveal complex and nuanced portrayals of the multiple intersections of race and class, this paper presents The Expanse as a space for potentially radical readings of contemporary uses of racecraft by those in power that attempt to split groups along different social identities.

BRYAN BANKER is a PhD candidate in American literature and culture at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität (LMU) in Munich, under Prof. Dr. Klaus Benesch. His dissertation, entitled “Black Hegelians: Dialectical Philosophy in African-American Aesthetics,” tracks the influence of German philosopher G.W.F. Hegel in the literary and performative work of black intellectuals and artists W.E.B Du Bois, C.L.R. James, Paul Robeson and Langston Hughes. Banker obtained a B.A. in History from Westminster College in 2005, and an M.A. in
American Studies at the Heidelberg Center for American Studies, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg, in 2012. While working on his dissertation, Banker lectures at Hochschule Fresenius in Munich, on diversity, culture, and ethics.
Wifi Network

The network: guest-unil
The key is: SANAS2018

In case you experience any trouble, here is a detailed description to establish a connection.

To find the wireless "guest-unil" network:
1. On your device, turn on the wifi icon.
2. View the available wireless networks.
3. Select the Wifi network "guest-unil" and connect (various "neighbor nets" may also be listed, but you can ignore these).
4. There might be a dialog box asking you to confirm your network connection saying "connecting to an unsecured network", click “Connect Anyway.”
5. A connection status dialog appears, while a network address is obtained and initial connection established.
6. When the Wireless Network Connection window displays "Connected", you can close this window and proceed to the next step.

The next step is to log into the network as a guest:
1. Start a web browser and try to connect to any valid HTTP Internet site. The wireless network login page automatically appears.
2. When the login page appears, enter the text of your guest pass key (SANAS2018) and click “Envoyer.”
3. When the browser displays your original webpage, your connection is active.

**Important**
With a guest pass, you have access to the internet and World Wide Web, but you cannot use any services such as file sharing, intranets, corporate email or printers. Should you require additional IT services, or if you have any problems with your guest pass, please speak to one of our student assistants.
Meals

Da Nino’s Lunches:
Lunch on Friday and Saturday are served in the restaurant Da Nino.

Where:
In the building Unithèque (see the map on the next page).

When:
On Friday, 12:00-13:30 and on Saturday, 12:30-14:00.

Budget:
The set menu, water, and tea or coffee is paid for. Everything else needs to be paid by individuals.

Bon appétit!

Café du théâtre – Conference Dinner
The conference dinner will take place at the Café du théâtre in town.

Where:
Avenue du théâtre 12; 1005 Lausanne.
We will leave from campus to the restaurant in groups after the second keynote address.

When:
Friday night, starting at 19:30.

Budget:
The food, wine, water, and tea or coffee is paid for. Everything else needs to be paid by individuals.

Bon appétit!
ON FRIDAY, NOV 2, we will be in the buildings Amphimax and Amphipôle, which are on the very left of the map. The metro stop is Unil-Sorge. All coffee breaks will take place in the hall in front of the room 414 in Amphimax.

LUNCH on Friday and Saturday will be served at the restaurant Da Nino, which is on the far right of the building Unithèque in the middle of the map.

ON SATURDAY, NOV. 3, we will be in the building Anthropole, which is on the very right of the map. The metro stop to get to this building is Unil-Chamberonne (previously Dorigny). All coffee breaks will take place in the hall 1130 of Anthropole.
Call for Papers: Volume 38, The Genres of Genre: Forms, Formats, and Cultural Formations
Edited by Cécile Heim, Boris Vejdovsky, and Benjamin Pickford

North American Studies have always had an intense but ambivalent relationship to genre, as these narrative patterns have participated in nationalist processes as well as in narratives of resistance. Emerging at the beginning of the twentieth century from concerns about naturalism and realism, American literary scholarship after WWII avoided the politicized post-war atmosphere by making the ‘romance’ the quintessential American novel genre, while cinematic genres such as the musical or the Western contributed to amplifying the mythic dimension of American self-definition. Since then, American Studies scholars have pioneered influential work on melodrama, the American Gothic, the jeremiad and other genres. Concurrently, Canadian literature’s prominent nation-building narratives were framed as documentary tales of regionalism, historical novels and social realism before evolving into dystopian and postmodern fiction, most famously by Margaret Atwood. Thus, among the recurring questions posed by genre is the conflicted relationship between literature/art and its social, historical, and cultural context. Terms such as ‘the political unconscious’ (Jameson), ‘cultural work’ (Tompkins), ‘narrative mode’ (Williams) and ‘performative’ (Austin, Turner) have been centrally determining, over the years, to help us understand how genres work and what they do. This collection seeks to build on the SANAS 2018 conference at the Université de Lausanne to further explore what roles genre plays in American and Canadian nation-building and counter-narratives, and how it evolves nowadays.

Papers are primarily invited from confirmed speakers at the SANAS 2018 conference, but we will also accept submissions from those who are unable to speak at the conference, on the following topics:
- The renewal and development of extant genres as well as emerging new genres
- The critical viability of the term ‘genre’ as opposed to ‘mode’, narrative ‘form’ or ‘theme’
- Assessment of recent scholarly work on form (e.g. Caroline Levine)
- Revisiting of older scholarly work and its influence (e.g. Fredric Jameson)
- Narrative/poetic forms and national identity
- Hybridity and intersectionality of form
- Genres intersections with gender, race, imperialism
- Genre and environmentalism/ecology
- Genre and resistance or subversion
- The continuous revival and repurposing of the fairy tale
- New developments in the North American short story

We invite submissions of 6,000-7,000 words adhering to the SPELL style guide (available at: http://wp.unil.ch/sanas2018/spell-38-cfp/). Copyright permissions for any images used must be obtained prior to submission. All submissions will be subject to blind peer-review prior to acceptance.

The deadline for submission is Tuesday 20 November 2018. Submission should be made as a Word document to the editors at sanas.conference2018@gmail.com. The acceptance of papers with suggested changes will be communicated by 31 December 2018, and all changes must be made by authors by 31 January 2019. The volume will be published in autumn 2019. For further information, please see our website (http://wp.unil.ch/sanas2018/spell-38-cfp/) or contact the editors at sanas.conference2018@gmail.com.
RHYMES FOR YOUNG GOHULS

Zinéma, Lausanne
1 Nov 2018
Doors / Portes: 19h30

Free entrance!
Entrée libre!

Please preregister at / Veuillez vous pré-inscrire sur:
www.eventbrite.com (Event title: "Rhymes for Young Ghouls")
Film in English / Sous-titres en français

Free screening of award winning Canadian film followed by a discussion on Indigenous cultures and youth

Présentation gratuite de ce film primé suivie d'une discussion sur les cultures et les jeunes aînées au Canada

with/avec: Prof. Sarah Henzi (Montréal)

This event is organized by the English Department at Unil. For more info: www.unil.ch/sanas2018