

RUHRCENTER of American Studies presents
2016 Ruhr PhD Forum
in American Studies

Ruhr-Universität Bochum, TU Dortmund
29 - 30 January 2016



2016 Ruhr PhD

Forum Schedule

FRIDAY // 29 January 2016 // Ruhr-University Bochum
SSC // Studierenden Service Center // Level 2 // Room 119
Universitätsstr. 150 // 44780 Bochum

13:00 – 13:10 Intro

13:10 – 15:10 CITIES // ECONOMIES // SPACES

13:10 – 13:50 Nico VÖLKER // Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen // A “Park” Grows in Brooklyn: Atlantic Yards, 21st Century Urbanism, and the “Brooklynization” of Brooklyn

13:50 – 14:30 Juan Pablo MELO // Stanford University // Metabolisms of Leisure: Cuisine, Identity, and the Vanguard Economy

14:30 – 15:10 Terence KUMPF // Enacting a Transnational American Imaginary for Social Change: The Socio-Cultural Work of Rebel Diaz

15:10 – 15:40 SNACKS // COFFEE

15:40 – 17:40 TELE // VISIONS

15:40 – 16:20 Ann-Kristin HENSEN // Talking to Cats in Whispered Dimensions: Online Fandom as a Transnational Space

16:20 – 17:00 Iris KEMMER // “Become a Renegade!”: A Participatory, Independent Film Project within *Star Trek* Fandom

17:00 – 17:40 Sandra DANNEIL // Framing Comic Transgression: The Rhetorics of *The Simpsons*

17:40 – 18:10 SNACKS // COFFEE

18:10 – 19:30 FINDING WORDS // POETRY IN TRANSLATION

18:10 – 18:50 Hanna RÜCKL // On the Visibility and Audibility of Writer/Translators

18:50 – 19:30 Bilal SOUDA // Walt Whitman and the Arab World

19:45 DINNER AT Q-WEST // RUB // 44801 BOCHUM (OPPOSITE TO THE G-BUILDINGS)

SATURDAY // 30 January 2016 // TU Dortmund University
IBZ // Internationales Begegnungszentrum
Emil-Figge-Str. 59 // 44227 Dortmund

09:30–11:30 MAPPING WORDS // POETIC GEOGRAPHIES

09:30–10:10 Juliet KASZAS-HOCH // Climate Change in Verse: A Poetic Valediction

10:10–10:50 Anna BONGERS // “How to map a changing thing:” Globalization in Jena Osman’s Poetry Collection *The Network*

10:50–11:30 Thomas CHADWICK // University of Leuven
Anxiety in the Archive: Reading the Anthropocene in Ben Lerner’s *10:04*

11:30–12:00 COFFEE // CHAMPAGNE

12:00–14:00 THE MEDIA // SOMETHING OLD // SOMETHING NEW

12:00–12:40 Marta TWARDOWSKA // Redeeming the Body: Nomadic Subjectivity, Female Agency, and Bodily Materialism at the Intersection of Motherhood and War Reporting

12:40–13:20 Timo WEIDNER // Influence beyond Scope: Local News during the Young Republic and Today

13:20–14:00 Courtney MOFFET-BATEAU // An Appreciation of Aesthetics and Form in the Black American Novel

14:00–14:10 OUTRO

13:00–13:10 INTRO

13:10–15:10 PANEL_1 // CITIES // ECONOMIES // SPACES

15:10–15:40 SNACKS // COFFEE

Nico VÖLKER //**A “Park” Grows in Brooklyn: Atlantic Yards, 21st Century Urbanism, and the “Brooklynization” of Brooklyn**

Since its inception in 2004, the billion dollar urban redevelopment project *Atlantic Yards* in downtown Brooklyn has set out to fundamentally alter the material and mental cityscape of the most populous New York City borough. *Atlantic Yards* has been discussed controversially throughout its existence, opponents claiming that it was to destroy the surrounding, already existing neighborhoods, driving up rents and property prices, all of it subsumed under the notion of gentrification. The project itself has been marketed in certain terms, prominently employing pastoral imagery and various narratives of nostalgia in order to gain public support for the project.

The paper presented is part of an ongoing PhD project, *Atlantic Yards* being one of the case studies of urban redevelopment projects discussed as singular chapters in the thesis. The chapter traces the narratives surrounding the *Atlantic Yards* project, delineating the prevalence of various, sometimes contradictory, nostalgias, as well as concepts of rurality and urbanity, “city” and “country” within these narratives. It is further argued that those narratives are indicative of a distinct 21st century urbanism, exemplified by a “Brooklynization” of Brooklyn.

NICO VÖLKER is a PhD student in English and American Literature at the International Graduate Centre for the Study of Culture (GCSC) at the University of Giessen after having received his MA in North American Studies at the University of Bonn in 2013. His research interests include contemporary American literature, global urban studies, nostalgia, popular culture, and sports. Since October 2014 he has been developing his PhD project entitled “The New Brooklyn Project(s): Narrating Urban Redevelopment and the Poetics of Gentrification” (working title).

Juan Pablo MELO //**Metabolisms of Leisure: Cuisine, Identity, and the Vanguard Economy**

An analysis of the link between work and leisure in vanguard economies. This study focuses on the cuisine industry as a crucial site for the retrofitting of ‘obstinate’ human characteristic in the service of the post-industrial economy, and in the formation of its attendant visions of the global.

The study centers on the Washington DC metropolitan area, the aggregate of a unique set of interlinked chains of post-industrial networks. First and foremost, the State bureaucratic, with its supporting consulting and contracting industries; second, the international and non- governmental institutions; finally, supporting commercial industries such as construction, IT, law, education, real estate, and leisure.

These networks are roughly arranged into a center-periphery spatial model: governmental and international at the center, supporting industries fanning out towards the suburbs. This model further corresponds to a socio-economic distribution of populations: in general, highly educated and creative in the center, tied to precarious contract and commercial support functions towards the periphery. An area of particular interest given the acute link between local dynamics and global processes, ongoing fluctuations within this localized spatial model include the flow of young ‘creatives’ into the city, a process linked to real estate price inflation and gentrification.

This study proposes that such dynamics can be tracked through a mapping of leisure industry infrastructure, and that such mapping can clarify the relationship between culture and the permutations of the global economy. It is asserted that food culture is a productive site for the analysis of the latter relationship, since the cuisine industry serves as a locus where ‘non- productive’ habits and practices clash with those demanded by the post-industrial economy. Finally, it is asserted that spatial and social fluctuations in the labor economy reflect differentiations in the relationship between leisure and work as these coalesce in identity formation and visions of the global.

JUAN PABLO MELO was raised in Bogotá, Colombia and the Washington DC Metro area. He holds a BA in Political Science and an MA in Literature from George Mason University, and is currently a PhD student in the Modern Thought and Literature program at Stanford University. Juan Pablo spent six years in the architecture-engineering- and logistics support industry before commencing his doctoral studies. His research focuses on space, literature, processes of modernization, and social and critical theory.

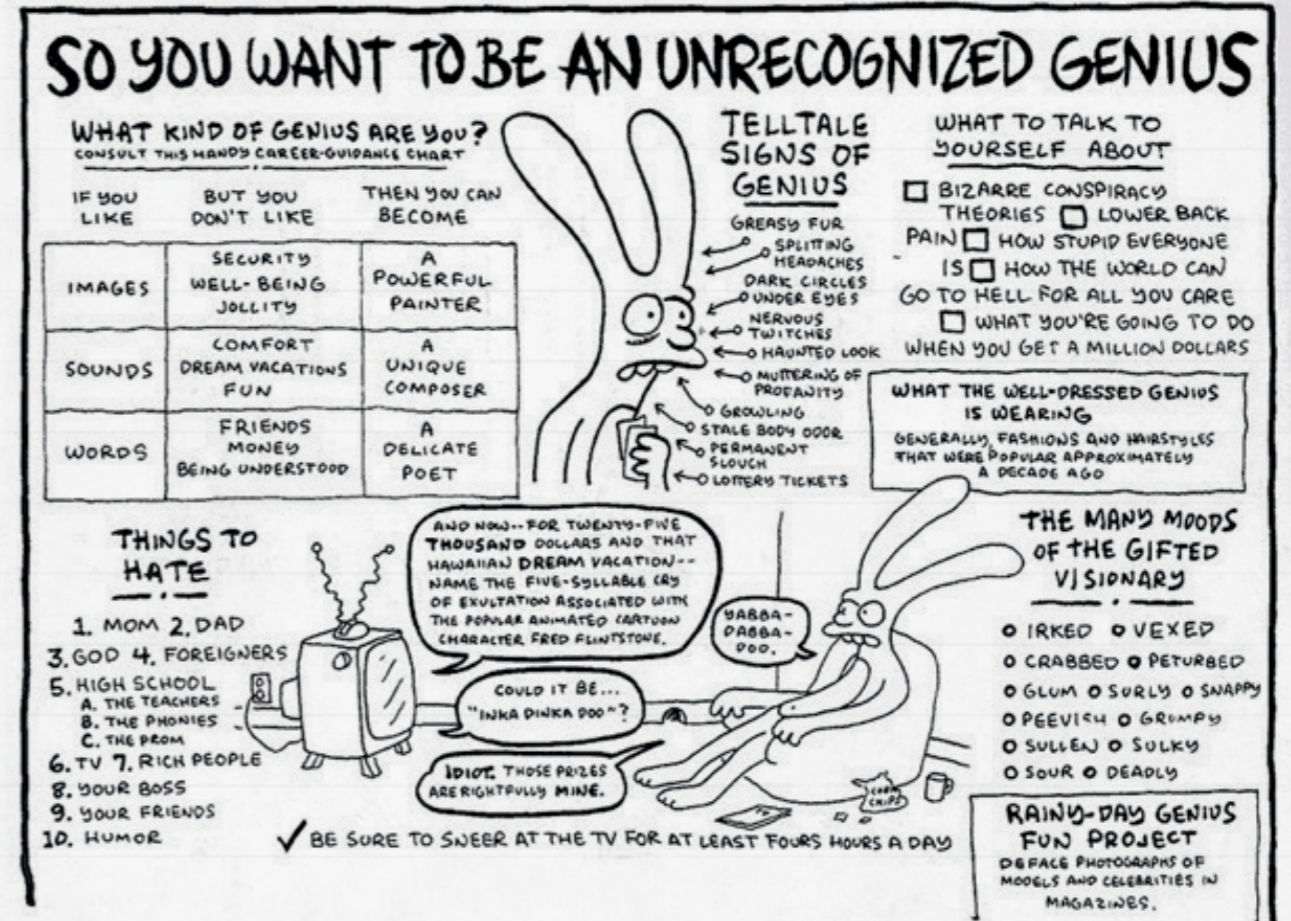
Terence KUMPF //

Enacting a Transnational American Imaginary for Social Change:
The Socio-Cultural Work of Rebel Diaz

Consisting of Chilean-born/US-raised brothers Rodrigo and Gonzalo Venegas, Rebel Diaz is a bilingual English-Spanish hip-hop duo triangulated among New York, Chicago, and Chile. Much more than the mere creation of recorded audiovisual material for sale, their politico-cultural outreach work—for example, the Rebel Diaz Arts Collective located in an abandoned warehouse in the South Bronx—functions transnationally, the aim of which is to synthesize a number of sociopolitical movements. Many instances of Rebel Diaz’s output encompass what has been defined as the transnational imaginary (cf. Bieger, Saldívar, and Voelz 2013).

Highlighting two examples of Rebel Diaz’s recorded output, this paper will show how the transnational imaginary emerges in their work. How is this bilingual material composed, and how does it function? What issues does it raise, and how does the duo “drop knowledge” on bilingual audiences? Finally, what potential exists for connecting similar sociopolitical movements across a number of geopolitical, cultural, ethnic, and linguistic spheres? In short, how does the work of Rebel Diaz trigger a transnational imaginary to address people living in a number of communities across the Americas so that they might connect, interact, cooperate, and become agents of change?

TERENCE KUMPF is an independent researcher and PhD candidate at the American Studies Department of TU Dortmund University. His research comparatively approaches bi- and multilingual hip-hop in the US and Germany from transnational and transcultural perspectives. His work concerns itself with transculturality, aesthetic experience, and a range of issues including, but not limited to, migration, cultural memory, and the transgender movement.



15:40–17:40 PANEL_2 // TELE // VISIONS

17:40–18:10 SNACKS // COFFEE

Ann-Kristin HENSEN //**Talking to Cats in Whispered Dimensions: Online Fandom as a Transnational Space**

While fan communities have existed for a long time, it is notable that with the establishment of the Internet, fan culture has evolved further and communities take on new forms. One of the communication platforms for fans is the micro-blogging website *Tumblr*. It offers fans a space to create new meanings of a TV show's narrative through the contextualization and detailed analysis of the original text. In my master's thesis, I have discussed how this changes the fans' perception of the text and reciprocally causes fans to respond more intensely and differentiated to it.

I primarily observed the fan community of the American television series *Supernatural* (The CW, 2005) on *Tumblr*, the dynamics within this community, and its effect on the user. I focused specifically on how the use of inter- and intra-textuality and devices like specific typography, animated GIFs and hashtags creates a unique form of transnational communication that is essential for the interaction between users. Furthermore, I depicted how blog posts are used to make the viewer more aware of the narrative background, cinematic devices and intertextual references, and especially how the aforementioned devices serve fans to de- and reconstruct the meaning of the original text repeatedly. In my presentation, I will illustrate how fans from all around the world have developed a homogeneous form of digital communication based on the English language. I will further demonstrate how, using this digital communication, fans enhance a series' text by adding new layers and meanings to scenes. In doing so, I will focus on scenes dealing with romantic love and sexuality since many fans particularly enjoy engaging actively with those—a phenomenon which I will further explore in my dissertation about the perception and reinvention of love in online fan communities.

ANN-KRISTIN HENSEN has been joining the American Studies Department of the TU Dortmund University as a PhD student since early 2015. She is currently working on her dissertation about digital fan communities. At TU Dortmund University she also obtained her master's degree in Applied Literary and Cultural Studies after earning a bachelor's degree in Applied Literary and Cultural Studies with minors in Psychology and Sociology.

Iris KEMMER //**“Become a Renegade!”: A Participatory, Independent Film Project within *Star Trek* Fandom**

Star Trek, although the last series bearing its name has ended in 2005, is still a show to pay heed to when investigating influential models of intercultural communication in popular culture. In order to find out about contemporary effects of *Star Trek* on a global audience, one has to look at today's fandom, from conventions to large independent fan projects like *Star Trek: Renegades* (2015).

In my presentation, I will deal with the independent film project *Star Trek: Renegades* that is especially popular within the *Star Trek* fandom these days. Fans actively support this project through crowdfunding actions. I argue that *Star Trek: Renegades* is in no way inferior to the official *Star Trek* series. As an ongoing web series, *Star Trek: Renegades* uses similar narrative elements such as conspiracy theories and intercultural conflicts, matters that are important in intercultural communication. For this reason, I will do a close reading of a scene that offers insights into these narrative structures.

Consequently, a possible future of the *Star Trek* universe could lie in fan-made productions of web-based series while the official *Star Trek* films show great perseverance in cinemas in which its 50th anniversary is going to be celebrated in 2016.

This presentation will be given in German.

IRIS KEMMER received her BA in Applied Linguistics, Applied Literary and Cultural Studies, and Philosophy, and her MA in Applied Linguistics at TU Dortmund University. In her interdisciplinary PhD project, Iris focuses on forms of intercultural communication in *Star Trek*.

Sandra DANNEIL //**Framing Comic Transgression: The Rhetorics of *The Simpsons***

Frames provide symbolic structures helping people to make sense of their realities and to deal with life's inequities through a dramaturgical perspective (cf. Smith/Voth 111) This insight was first brought up by Kenneth Burke in 1937 to apply a rhetorical concept as a means of ethical construction to the study of popular culture.

Liberated from its literary antecedent, popcultural rhetorical analysis claims both the comic frame and the tragic frame not to be interpreted as oppositional, but essential in the examination of popular texts like TV sitcoms and – and in my case most specifically – of *The Simpsons* (FOX, since 1989). As organizing principles, frames give structure to the vast amount of the show's narrative discourses. *The Simpsons* use these frames to not only visualize the permanent violation of hierarchies to mirror social flaw; these frames, moreover, provide symbolic strategies to expand the functions of seriality.

The ambivalence of the framing—by switching between comic and tragic mode—becomes only possible through the show's long-lasting episodic and serial structure. In contrast to drama series for instance, the seriality in *The Simpsons* thereby allows for getting yourself into its absurdist breaches to get its comedy across. With regard to the concept of masculinity in Homer, viewers' can either reject or accept it along the show's 25 minutes; in the end, his misbehavior and comic fractures may end its absurdity, but are reset in each following episode.

In my talk I would like to discuss the approach of tragic/comic framing as a cornerstone of my analysis of *The Simpsons'* discourses. By the use of rhetorical theory in popular seriality, it is my aim to prove evidence of the existence of comic transgression and transgressive comedy. Burke and his followers create the theoretical ground, on which the basic argument of my dissertation will be built.

SANDRA DANNEIL has an MA in Film and Television Studies from the Ruhr-University Bochum and received a BA for Teacher Education in German and English. She is a PhD candidate and a faculty member of American Cultural Studies and the Media at the Institute of English and American Studies at TU Dortmund University. In her dissertation project Sandra Danneil works on comedy theories of Transgression and Liminality in the American sitcom *The Simpsons*. She worked in the film and television industry for several years and dedicated much of her time to writing about gender issues in film involving phenomena of unpleasure, pornography, and the New Extremity. Besides teaching courses in Cultural and Media Studies, she has been a member of the Ruhr PhD Forum organizing committee since 2012 and holds an office as equal opportunity officer of the Faculty of Cultural Sciences at TU Dortmund University.

18:10–19:30 **PANEL_3 // FINDING WORDS //****POETRY IN TRANSLATION**

19:45

DINNER AT Q-WEST // RUB //**Hanna RÜCKL //****On the Visibility and Audibility of Writer/Translators**

This paper addresses the question of how translators can be visible and audible in the books that feature their interlingual transitions. German writer and artist Barbara Köhler and US-American writer Jonathan Franzen are two examples which also translate. Their publications *Tender Buttons: Zarte knöpft* (Köhler 2004) and *The Kraus Project* (Franzen 2013) are examples that go against “the illusion of transparency” (7), as Lawrence Venuti (2012) describes the way in which interlingual renderings are commonly perceived (especially in English language). Without question, Köhler's and Franzen's visibility is enabled in the first place by their status as well-known authors. The visibility of a translator can then be determined by the texts, which precede, follow, and/or are intertwined with the translation. The translator's voice is made audible through the way the translator writes about their work in footnotes or in an essay included in the book. When translators are provided with room for expression apart from the space allocated for their translations, the result is that they are able to explain their translations and express themselves creatively, thus adding to their visibility as well as audibility.

HANNA C. RÜCKL is a doctoral candidate at the Institute of English and American Studies at TU Dortmund University and part of the RuhrCenter of American Studies' PhD program. Her dissertation project “The Writer/Translator and Transatlantic Literary Translation” deals with the relationship of literary translation and creative writing. In 2012, Hanna Rückl received her MA in English and American Studies from the University of Graz, Austria. She teaches classes in American cultural and literary studies as well as classes in which translation is used as a tool to critically engage with poetry.

Bilal SOUDA //

Walt Whitman and the Arab World

Walt Whitman is among the most influential poets in the American canon, often called the father of free verse. Although free verse requires no regular meter and often dispenses with rhyme and other traditional poetic techniques, Walt Whitman does use them to create some sense of structure. The tension between “free” verse and this structure is seminal for his reception also in other languages. Whitman’s poetry has had a great impact on world poetry. It has been argued that Whitman plays a prominent role in Arabic poetic reform, helping Arab poets to move away from the weight of traditional rules and conventions. Lebanese critic and poet Amin al-Rihani for example recognized Whitman’s important role for breaking both the ‘chains’ and ‘conventions’ of traditional poetics. Rihani states “Shakespeare liberated English poetry from the chains of rhyme. The American Walt Whitman liberated it from the chains of prosody, such as conventional measures and common meters” (Hutaf al-Awdiyah 16).

In spite of a number of studies of individual examples, an overall comprehensive study of Whitman’s reception in Arabic, in translation as well as critical and creative receptions has not yet been undertaken. My doctoral thesis will tackle both formal and thematic innovations in Arab poetry linked to Walt Whitman. Rihani, Gibran, and Youssef are only few of a much larger group of Arab poets whose link to Whitman is significant for their poetic output. This influence is not exclusive to their artistic form of adopting prose poetry, but it extends to the content of poetry in terms of themes or the advocacy of democracy and freedom. In my talk a detailed analysis of the translations will provide a correlative to the aesthetic questions raised in the creative (“poetic”) reception by Whitman. The presentation will outline the Arabic reception of Whitman and present one example in greater detail.

BILAL SOUDA is a PhD candidate at the American Studies Department at TU Dortmund University, working on his project of “Walt Whitman and the Arab World.” Bilal worked previously as liaison officer at United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) in Barcelona, and one of his duties was editing the UCLG-MEWA newsletter. His thesis will add to the knowledge of Whitman’s reception in the world and, at the same time, address a chapter in the cultural dialogue between the United States and the Arab World.

Seminar BINGO!

To play, simply print out this bingo sheet and attend a departmental seminar.

Mark over each square that occurs throughout the course of the lecture.

The first one to form a straight line (or all four corners) must yell out to win!



SEMINAR BINGO				
Speaker bashes previous work	Repeated use of "um..."	Speaker sucks up to host professor	Host Professor falls asleep	Speaker wastes 5 minutes explaining outline
Laptop malfunction	Work ties in to Cancer/HIV or War on Terror	"...et al."	You're the only one in your lab that bothered to show up	Blatant typo
Entire slide filled with equations	"The data clearly shows..."	FREE Speaker runs out of time	Use of Powerpoint template with blue background	References Advisor (past or present)
There's a Grad Student wearing same clothes as yesterday	Bitter Post-doc asks question	"That's an interesting question"	"Beyond the scope of this work"	Master's student bobs head fighting sleep
Speaker forgets to thank collaborators	Cell phone goes off	You've no idea what's going on	"Future work will..."	Results conveniently show improvement

JORGE CHAM © 2007

09:30–11:30 PANEL_1 // MAPPING WORDS //

POETIC GEOGRAPHIES

11:30–12:00 COFFEE // CHAMPAGNE

Juliet KASZAS-HOCH //**Climate Change in Verse: A Poetic Valediction**

Environmentalism has long occupied a place in poetry. Today, though, as climate change has provoked a paradigm shift—as understanding our natural systems and altering how we treat the earth has become urgent in step with a rise in temperatures and sea level, more frequent and more severe storms and droughts, a more unpredictable future—nature poetry has come to serve as a memorial for earth as it was.

My research focuses on how American eco-poetry addresses global warming and changing weather, and I want to consider the distinction between poems born from or illustrative of natural disasters and poems that address climate change in particular. I am looking closely at the places within these poems and exploring how these works stand as a reminder of a purer past and as an omen for what's to come, as we stand at the tipping point, surveying the irreversible damage. Additionally, I am interested in the intersection of art, science, and education inasmuch as poetry could play a part in the wider conversation about climate change. Can poems function as a tool of environmental awareness, or are they merely an eloquent goodbye? For this presentation, I plan to discuss poet Jorie Graham's collection *Sea Change* (2009), as well as the work of poet Gary Snyder. I also intend to reference John Felstiner's *Can Poetry Save the Earth?* (2009), and Jay Parini's *Why Poetry Matters* (2008).

JULIET KASZAS-HOCH is a writer from Long Beach Island, off the coast of New Jersey, USA. Juliet graduated from Princeton University in 2000, and received her MFA from Pennsylvania State University in 2004. She is currently enrolled as a doctoral student at TU Dortmund University.

Anna BONGERS //**“How to map a changing thing:“****Globalization in Jena Osman's Poetry Collection *The Network***

This paper investigates how Jena Osman approaches globalization in her poetry collection *The Network* (2010). The objective is to show how Osman's poetry maps global structures. Employing the structure of the network and the knot as well as using etymological tree diagrams and actual street maps, Osman sounds out the possibilities to depict immensely complex global structures in poetic/hybrid text forms. Osman draws parallels between the past and the present, highlights reoccurring patterns and develops structures that, ultimately, all turn out to be fragile. Her collection historicizes and contextualizes complex contemporary issues such as the (still ongoing) financial crisis in the US and environmental pollution while adding new interpretations and layers of meaning. The larger argument underpinning these claims about Osman's poetry is that poetry as a genre has the capacity of depicting and critically engaging with overlapping and complex structures that characterize a contemporary globalized world in a unique way due to genre-specific features such as transgressive and self-conscious use of language as well as deconstructive experiments with form. These features allow poetry to conceptualize and manage such highly complex structures in narrowly circumscribed space.

In *The Network*, Jena Osman uses different structuring devices to inspect selected events in US history. In an intriguing response to contemporary America, she uses history (historical “facts”) and etymology (analysis of key words) for socio-political commentary. At the forefront is a desire to understand and systemize what is “now,” which is juxtaposed with the insight that ordering systems like language itself or maps supply only approximations and are unable to capture “the essence” of things. The resulting networks are most valuable in opening up new lines of inquiry rather than providing answers.

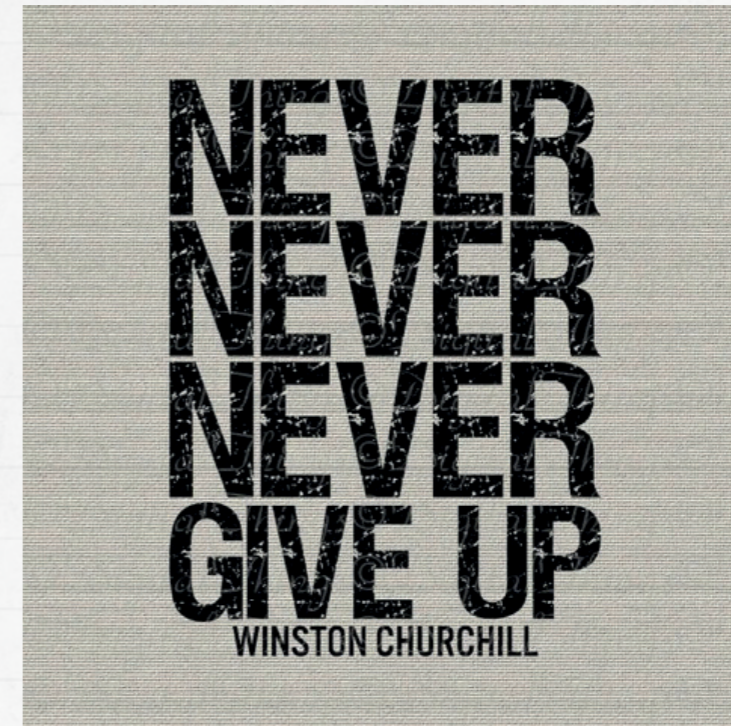
ANNA BONGERS is in her second year of working on her dissertation project entitled “Mappings of Postmodern Global Structures in Contemporary North American Poetry” at the American Studies Department of the Ruhr-University Bochum. Her project investigates the way globalization (economical, political, ecological global structures) is presented in contemporary North American poetry. She received an MA degree from the University of South Carolina in German Studies and an MA degree from the Ruhr-University Bochum in Comparative Literature Studies and English/American Studies in 2013. Her research interests include contemporary American literature, particularly poetry, postmodern literature and other funky forms, contemporary American culture and globalization.

Thomas CHADWICK //
University of Leuven // Anxiety in the Archive:
Reading the Anthropocene in Ben Lerner's *10:04*

This paper reads Ben Lerner's 2014 novel *10:04* in relation to the geological question of the Anthropocene through an exploration of the concept of archive. Rapidly adopted within the humanities, the scientific question of a geological epoch of the Anthropocene has already been interpreted as marking both the collision of human and natural history (Chakrabarty) and demanding a stark questioning of our received understanding of man and nature, culture and environment, world and thing (Clark). Yet, the geological definition of the Anthropocene, as the inscription of human agency into the sedimentary archive of the physical world, also forces us to consider our world as if it "would be readable in the absence of what we now take to be readers" (Colebrook).

It is this latter aspect of the Anthropocene that this paper seeks to discuss directly by considering the notion of archive—as the series of inscriptions and traces from which historical knowledge is recovered. Questions of archive are central to Lerner's novel which sees a curator build an exhibition from damaged artwork; a schoolboy explore the complex archaeological legacy of the Brontosaurus; and the novelist narrator attempt to write a novel about another novelist's protagonists who sells his fictionalized archive to a university collection. The novel's exploration of these archival themes are bookended by the arrival in New York of hurricanes Irene and Sandy and in that sense *10:04* subtly invites an exploration of the highly prevalent archival desire in relation to questions of environmental crisis. Through a close reading of the novel in relation to recent theorizations of the archive from both the field of history (Steedman, Stoler) and critical theory (Foucault, Derrida), this paper will explore the relation between the personal archives of *10:04* and the broader questions of archive fostered by the epoch of the Anthropocene.

THOMAS CHADWICK is reading for a PhD in Literature and KU Leuven. He previously studied for a BA in History at King's College London and received his MA in Comparative Literature from Goldsmiths, University of London. His doctoral research focuses on American fiction and the Anthropocene. His thesis uses the theoretical concept of archive as a lens through which to explore the implications of the Anthropocene in both novels, where environmental crisis is explicit, as well as those texts, where the reframed relationship between the human species and the planet they inhabit is played out in more precise anxieties.



12:00–14:00 PANEL_2 // THE MEDIA //
SOMETHING OLD // SOMETHING NEW

14:00–14:10 OUTRO

Marta TWARDOWSKA //

Redeeming the Body: Nomadic Subjectivity, Female Agency, and Bodily Materialism at the Intersection of Motherhood and War Reporting

As Rosi Braidotti puts it in *Metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming* (2002), “the point is not to know who we are, but rather what, at last, we want to become, how to represent mutations, changes and transformations, rather than Being in its classical modes” (2). These varying and continuously changing entities behind the dynamic processes of meaning-making characterize a nomadic subject as be(com)ing of hybrid nature. Caught in the moment of “transition, hybridization and nomadization” (2), an embodied or en fleshed female subject – with its maternal potentiality – destabilizes the boundaries of the phallogocentric discourse of war reporting. Whether pregnant, in the process of becoming pregnant, or maternal by the sole link to its biological capability, the body of a female war reporter becomes the ground for the subversive expression of the self through the interplay of the “external factors and the internal complexity of nomadic subjectivity” (2). The intimate condition of being a “host of life-processes” (132) within the death-driven reality of war brings about the deconstruction of the sole category of woman and implications of motherhood as the sites of conflicting factors. The voice of a woman war reporter, filtered through the profoundly personal maternal experience, speaks out for the female critical and life encounter with the new forms of existence, subjectivity, identity, and knowledge, adding a fresh perspective to the contemporary debates on female agency and the ways it is realized and contested. The question of an emerging subject-in-process which addresses both the maternal and war contexts poses a series of challenges to the dominant visions of maternal femininity and anthropocentric regime of power structures – provoking and sustaining a critique of a unitary and socially located representation of a female subject in the war arena of gender polarization. The new formations behind the notions of a woman war reporter and a mother provide therefore new forms of an alternative expression for a nomadic – non-unitary and multilayered – female subject to emerge.

MARTA TWARDOWSKA graduated from the American Studies Center of the University of Warsaw and also completed Gender Studies at the Institute of Literary Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences. She is currently pursuing a PhD in American Studies at TU Dortmund University, working on a thesis entitled “Unsilenced: Female War Reporters in the Contested Gender Arena.” Her research interests include women’s studies, feminist philosophy, and feminist perspectives on the body, gendered war narratives, and war reporting.

Timo WEIDNER //

Influence beyond Scope: Local News during the Young Republic and Today

In my presentation I talk about two moments in the history of local news in the United States that are more than 200 years apart, but show interesting similarities. The current state of online news is very peculiar: While the analogue or offline part of the business has been eroding over the past fifteen years, a number of local news outlets on the web have at the same time succeeded in finding ways to reach and engage audiences in exciting ways and to make an impression on the rest of the news industry. Another time during which local news outlets were able to exert influence significantly beyond their original scope was during the early years of the United States, when policies implemented with the establishment of the US postal service saw local newspapers from communities old and new be distributed throughout the rapidly expanding country for little or no cost. Both instances also show media in a state of development: the newspaper in the early 19th century and local news on the Internet today. By comparing local news during these two points in time I hope to gain insights, for example, on the importance and benefits of a ‘healthy’ local news industry for society. This presentation is part of my effort to historicize the overall subject of my PhD project, which focuses on online news outlets that use local and participatory elements as moments of distinction and their influence on the US news landscape as a whole.

TIMO WEIDNER received his BA from the University of Düsseldorf and his master’s degree in North American Studies at the University of Bonn. His master’s thesis “Alternative vs. Mainstream Formats: Does the Dichotomy Hold on the Web?” was nominated for the Ambassador’s Award, awarded annually by the Embassy of the United States and the University of Bonn. Since 2014, Timo Weidner has been a PhD student at TU Dortmund University and a member of the RuhrCenter of American Studies. His dissertation project deals with online news outlets that use local and participatory elements as moments of distinction and their influence on the US news landscape as a whole.

Courtney MOFFET-BATEAU //

An Appreciation of Aesthetics and Form in the Black American Novel

The novel may not be the greatest accomplishment of the black intellectual tradition, yet it arguably best encompasses the diversity of its complicated history. It is a genre known to celebrate voice, rhythm and sound. Novelists, such as Ralph Ellison (*Invisible Man*) and Toni Morrison (*Jazz*), have famously dedicated full experimental narratives seeking to understand how sound and aesthetics contribute to narrative form. Its literary history also ascertains what Mahdu Dubey terms the uplift and vernacular paradigms, and yet with every written word the novel vigorously engages with what could be the greatest contribution of the black intellectual tradition: existential philosophy. They accomplish this by simply posing the questions to literary theorists and consumers: who is the speaker and do/can they even exist? This last point is of great importance due to cultural climate authors of color are currently creating within and against—*Publishers Weekly* recently reported that 89% of surveyed publishers identify as white or Caucasian.

This presentation sets out to first celebrate the form of the novel; then goes onto ask how novels—written by American authors racialized as black—are consumed and used within a post-multiculturalism critique US print culture. Typically literary theorists seldom investigate the aesthetic form of black novels and often only judge it by its social critique therefore this presentation will begin to ask how “ethnic voices” function in US literary theory and print culture. (1) First by investigating sound and music in the novel, (2) this presentation will also explore the voice and its variations in dialect—a defining attribute, what Henry Louis Gates Jr terms the “Talking Book”—all maybe to hint at a high cultural pluralist aesthetics that would assess the novels’ form according to their willingness to privilege oral intellectual art forms.

COURTNEY MOFFET-BATTEAU graduated in 2008 with a dual BA in Philosophy and Black Studies from Pitzer College in Claremont, California. The following year, she was awarded a Fulbright grant, which brought her to Germany, where she worked as an English Teaching Assistant between 2008 and 2010. Courtney completed her MA in National and Transnational Studies in 2012 at the Westfälische Wilhelms Universität in Münster with the submission of her thesis entitled, “Black Beauty Aesthetics: Combating American Beauty Constructions of the Past with Art of the Present.” She is presently working as a teaching assistant in the North American Studies program in Essen. In May 2013 she began working on her dissertation at the University of Duisburg-Essen.

KEEP YOUR FACE
always
 → TOWARD THE
sunshine
 AND SHADOWS WILL FALL
 BEHIND YOU. *walt whitman*

VENUES //

RUHR-UNIVERSITY BOCHUM

SSC // STUDIERENDEN SERVICE CENTER
LEVEL 2 // ROOM 119
UNIVERSITÄTSSTR. 150
44780 BOCHUM

TU DORTMUND UNIVERSITY

IBZ // INTERNATIONALES BEGEGNUNGSZENTRUM
EMIL-FIGGE-STR. 59
44227 DORTMUND

HOW TO GET THERE //

BOCHUM BY PUBLIC TRANSPORT // RECOMMENDED

Once you reach Bochum main station, just take the U35 headed towards “Bochum Hustadt.” After a 10 min ride, exit at “Ruhr-Universität” and, upon leaving the station, head to the right and cross the pedestrian bridge. The SSC is the first building on the left hand side.

BOCHUM BY CAR //

The RUB is best reached via the A 43. Just take the exit 19 (Bochum-Querenburg/Universität). Continue on Universitätsstr. following the signs for “Ruhr-Universität” until you get to the exit Uni-Mitte. Following the left lane, you reach guest parking. Take the stairs located near the parking lots entrance and go up to ground level. On the right hand side, you see the UV building. The SSC is located behind it.

DORTMUND BY PUBLIC TRANSPORT // RECOMMENDED

Take the S1 (every twenty minutes, either from Düsseldorf or Dortmund main station) and get off at the stop “Dortmund Universität”. Get out of the station, walk up the stairs and keep left. Walk to the bridge, go down the stairs, turn right and continue towards the traffic light on Emil-Figge-Str./ Vogelpothsweg. Take the left in the junction and walk about 200m along Emil-Figge-Str. until you see a big red building on the right-hand side of the street. This is the Internationales Begegnungszentrum (IBZ).

DORTMUND BY CAR //

The campus of the TU Dortmund is situated between to the motorway exits “Dorstfeld“ and “Barop/ Universität,“ close to intersection where the Sauerlandlinie A 45 (Frankfurt-Dortmund) crosses the Ruhrschnellweg B 1 / A 40. The best motorway exit you find on the B 1 / A 40 is “Dortmund-Barop.“ There are signs at both exits leading you to the university. There are several parking options either at Vogelpothsweg underneath the Mensa, on the opposite side of Emil-Figge-Str. 50, or directly in front of the IBZ at the roadside (limited).

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SENIOR EXPERTS //

MARIO CHANDLER is a Full Professor of Spanish and Chair of the Department of Foreign Languages at Oglethorpe University in Atlanta, Georgia. A Spanish medieval and Golden-Age specialist by training, Chandler’s most recent research and publication interests focus on Afro-Hispanic themes and innovative intersections between Hispanic culture and the African diaspora.

SUSANNE ROHR is a full professor of American literature and culture and chair of American Studies at Hamburg University. Susanne Rohr has published in the fields of literary and cultural theory, semiotics, American pragmatism, epistemology, and on a broad range of topics in American literature of the 19th and 20th centuries. Her research interests further include Jewish-American Literature, American poetry of the modern and postmodern avant-garde and international representations of the Holocaust at the end of the 20th century.

MARIO CHANDLER

BARBARA BUCHENAU

KORNELIA FREITAG

WALTER GRÜNZWEIG

RANDI GUNZENHÄUSER

JENS GURR

JOSEF RAAB

SUSANNE ROHR

MICHAEL WALA

...AND ALL THE

OTHER HELPING HANDS

RUHR
UNIVERSITÄT
BOCHUM

RUB

GdF
Gesellschaft der Freunde
der Universität Dortmund e.V.


UA RUHR

tu technische universität
dortmund

UNIVERSITÄT
DUISBURG
ESSEN