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Inter-American Studies and Nineteenth-Century Literature

GABRIELE PISARZ-RAMÍREZ and MARKUS HEIDE - Guest Editors

MARKUS HEIDE and
 GABRIELE PISARZ-
 RAMÍREZ

"Introduction: Inter-American Studies and Nineteenth-Century Literature"

HELMBRECHT BREINIG

"Invasive Methods: The Opening of Latin America in Nineteenth-Century U.S. Literature"

ABSTRACT: During the nineteenth century, countless armed (military or filibustering) invasions, political interventions, acts of economic appropriation, and cultural (notably missionary) reeducation efforts by the United States or individual American citizens took place in virtually all parts of what was then and what is now Latin America. The motives ranged from territorial expansion or securing U.S. hegemony against European competitors or naked financial greed to an improvement of supposedly backward societies and civilizations. The respective geographical imaginations of both Latin America and the United States which informed these measures as well as the literary texts dealing with them follow certain established patterns. Anti-expansionists like Cooper or Melville avoided them by having their narratives take place in off-shore settings mirroring the instability of values and perceptions, but the jingoistic adventure novels of Frank R. Stockton do the same for the purpose of providing their protagonists direct naval access to the treasures they are to win and thus escape the need to deal with the complexities of Latin American life. Where these are actually depicted, the writers on both sides followed stereotypical assumptions even when they had extensive first-hand knowledge like travel writer John L. Stephens, who thus compares unfavorably with Alexander von Humboldt. The discursive pattern is still discernible at the end of the century in the adventure novels and travelogues of Richard Harding Davis. Only in the writings of Stephen Crane do we find a serious self-reflective stance vis-à-vis the role America and Americans played south of the border.

MARKUS HEIDE

"Herman Melville's 'Benito Cereno,' Inter-American

Relations, and Literary Pan-Americanism"

ABSTRACT: The novella "Benito Cereno" takes up such concerns as slavery, colonialism, and imperialism in a way that goes beyond the national context of the United States. As in much of Melville's writing, an explicitly transnational fictional perspective is employed for the symbolical negotiation of conflict lines, historical controversies and predicaments of U.S. society and culture. "Benito Cereno," the following essay wants to suggest, does so in complex and decidedly Pan-American terms. The tale, simultaneously one about liberation and deception, appears particularly fruitful for an analysis of both fictional accounts of inter-American relations and the literary history of the postcolonial Americas.

GABRIELE
RAMÍREZ

PISARZ-

"Blurring the Boundaries of Gender: The Strong 'Spanish' Woman in Nineteenth-Century U.S. Popular Women's Writing"

ABSTRACT: 'Spanish' women enter American popular literature in notable numbers in the period after the Mexican-American War, often as highly racialized figures. While they are frequently represented as exotic and passionate objects of desire in dime novels and other popular writings by male authors, popular women writers such as Augusta Evans, Louisa May Alcott, and May Agnes Fleming employ the figure of the 'Spanish' woman for the cautious subversion and violation of Victorian norms of femininity. The presence of the 'Spanish' woman of European or Latin American descent in these texts functions to dramatize the white female character's impulses of rebellion against contemporary limitations on white middle-class women. Drawing on stereotypical associations of the Latin woman with darkness, unruliness, impulsiveness, and excess, Evans, Alcott, and Fleming create racialized figures of 'Spanishness' which allow them to invent scenarios of independence and power.

JOSEF RAAB

"The Imagined Inter-American Community of María Amparo Ruiz de Burton"

ABSTRACT: María Amparo Ruiz de Burton (1832-1895) is among the best-remembered authors of nineteenth-century Mexican-American literature. However, her assimilationist position and her eminent social status are not characteristic of early Mexican-American writers in general, who tended to focus on resisting Anglo dominance. In her two major novels, *Who Would Have Thought It?* (1872) and *The Squatter and the Don* (1885), Ruiz de Burton acknowledges that there is a distinct *mexicanidad*, a defining cultural identity of people of Mexican descent. But her narrative construction of a group identity is not based on ethnicity: while her fictions exclude Mexican farm laborers,

indios, mestizos, and the lower classes from this imagined community, they propagate an alliance of the wealthy and righteous among U.S. Mexicans as well as U.S. Anglos. This imagined community is exemplified by the central couple of *The Squatter and the Don* and is inspired by the author's own marriage to a land-owning Anglo army captain in California. Its defining features concentrate on the class-based values and customs that could define a future inter-American elite. Ruiz de Burton's elitism has created difficulties for the canon formation and self-definition of a Mexican-American literature that had traditionally highlighted ethnicity as well as working-class experiences and that had been focused on Mexican opposition to the Anglo mainstream rather than on the imaginative creation of an Anglo-Mexican community.

José LIMÓN

"Nations, Regions, and Mid-Nineteenth-Century Texas: History in *On the Long Tide* and *Caballero*"

ABSTRACT: This paper examines two historical novels written in Texas in the first third of the twentieth century but representing social life in mid-nineteenth-century Texas. The first, *On the Long Tide* by Laura Krey, addresses the Texas Revolution and Independence from Mexico beginning in the 1820s and climaxing in 1836. It does so from an Old South plantation perspective then transplanted to east Texas. The second, *Caballero*, co-authored by Jovita Gonzalez and Eve Raleigh, represents society in the largely Mexican settlement section of southern Texas on the eve of the Mexican-American War of 1846-1848. The war directly impacted this society but also expanded the United States to its present border with Mexico and to the Pacific Ocean. Together, then, both novels speak of the period during which the very idea of the Americas as an interactive—if asymmetrical—alignment of new nations independent from the Old World comes into actual being with Mexico and the United States as the most proximate of these. Each novel offers a symbolic and seeming solution to the social conflict generated by the first interaction in Texas between Mexico and the United States. *On the Long Tide* proposes an idyllic continuation of Old South, white, plantation, slave-owning society in the new Texas territory wrested from Mexico, while *Caballero* offers a much more complex stance of negotiation and compromise between Mexicans and white Southerners in Texas. However, as novels of the first third of the twentieth century, both novels are also using a nineteenth-century idiom to address continuing concerns with race and ethnicity but also modernization in Texas, the South, and the United States in the historical prelude to the civil rights struggles of the mid-twentieth century. The paper closes with an assessment of these works from the perspective of critical regionalism.

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 THOMAS CLAVIEZ

"'Declining' the (American) Sublime: Stephen Crane's 'The Open Boat'"

ABSTRACT: Literary scholars usually locate the work of Stephen Crane at the threshold between naturalism and modernism. In his story "The Open Boat," however, Crane uses the concept of the sublime as the unrepresentable in a proto-postmodern fashion to ironically and self-reflectively juxtapose it to naturalism's claim to depict life as authentic as possible. He thus 'declines' the sublime—in the double sense of the word as objecting to, and as grammatical declension of—as he dramatizes the different degrees and stages of distance and the resulting impossibility of representation, according to his dictum "A man is sure to fail at it [honesty], but there is something in the failure." This echoes the conceptualization of the sublime of a philosopher who is at the threshold of modernity and postmodernity—that of Theodor W. Adorno.

REGINA SCHOBER

"Amy Lowell's Peasant Dance: Transcribing Primitivism in 'Stravinsky's Three Pieces 'Grotesques,' for String Quartet'"

ABSTRACT: Like many other modernist writers, American poet Amy Lowell turned to music as an inspirational source and aesthetic model for her writings. Her poem "Stravinsky's Three Pieces 'Grotesques' for String Quartet" will serve here as a paradigmatic illustration of Lowell 's intermedial endeavor to transcribe a piece of music into the poetic medium. However, Lowell does not only transpose the sounds and rhythms of Stravinsky's piece into her experimental poem. By applying a functionalist approach to intermedia studies, the essay reveals that Lowell 's poem also takes up cultural implications related to the concept of primitivism in Stravinsky's work and translates this concept into the particular context of American modernism. Consequently, Lowell 's musicalized poem both imitates and interprets the original musical text it draws upon, transforming not only its semiotic material, but also its cultural connotations.

JAN KUCHARZEWSKI

 "'From Language to Life is Just Four Letters' Self-Referentiality vs. the Reference of Self in Richard Powers's *Galatea 2.2*"

ABSTRACT: This paper will read Richard Powers's *Galatea 2.2* (1995) as a self-reflexive autobiography that consciously examines the fundamental problems of life-writing. Additionally, it will demonstrate how this novel, although clearly a text that can be labeled 'postmodern,' nevertheless diverges from many postmodern theories on autobiographic texts by re-emphasizing the relevance of referentiality as a meaning-giving element.

Powers initially reduces his autobiographic self to a purely textual subject, only to expose the limitations of such an act by contrasting his own textuality as an 'author function' with the dilemma of a disembodied computer network that is supposed to understand works of literature. Eventually, the novel articulates a complex critique of what Powers defines as "postmodern solipsism" and asks for a "reengagement with the world's living concepts." The concluding part of the paper will examine the narratological implications of this reengagement with referentiality for Powers's entire oeuvre.

SLADJA BLAZAN

"Urban Dwellers: Women Writers Who Left Eastern Europe Never to Arrive in the United States"

ABSTRACT: A recurrent question in American literary studies remains unanswered: "Where are the Eastern European writers?" Women writers in particular seem to be missing. To use Thomas Gladsky's words: "[E]ven to this date, no Yezierskas, Kingstons, Angelous, or Morrisons have emerged to capture the unique story of the Slavic woman" (6). Leaving the definition of the category "Slavic woman" to Gladsky, this article seeks to reach conclusions that will unveil reasons for the curious omission of Eastern European voices, in particular those of women writers, in current discussions on transnationalism, migration, and ethnic categories in the context of literature. At the same time it highlights the (lost) tradition of Eastern European women's writing by reading Iva Pekárková's *Gimme the Money* (2002) against the backdrop of turn-of-the-twentieth-century writers Anzia Yezierska, Mary Antin, and Elisabeth Stern in the first part and Ludmila Ulitskaya's *The Funeral Party* (2001) and Dubravka Ugresic's *Thank You for Not Reading* (2003) with reference to Cold-War dissident writing and the special position of Vladimir Nabokov's oeuvre in the second part of the text. The article concludes with two examples of non-migrant American writers' perspectives on Eastern Europe. Issues concerning post-socialist studies are discussed under the light of these predicaments.

CHRISTA BUSCHENDORF

Forum: "Introduction to 'Casting America's Outcasts'"

RUSSELL BANKS and
Loïc WACQUANT

"Casting America 's Outcasts: A Dialogue between Russell Banks and Loïc Wacquant"

BIRGIT BAURIDL and
INGRID GESSNER

"Publications in American Studies from German-Speaking Countries, 2007"

Amst 53.3 (2008)

Die Bush-Administration: Eine erste Bilanz

ANDREAS FALKE - Guest Editor

ANDREAS FALKE

"Einleitung: Die Bush-Administration: Eine erste Bilanz"

ANDREAS FALKE

"Another Failed Presidency? Eine vorläufige Einschätzung der Präsidentschaft von G.W. Bush"

ABSTRACT: This article is an attempt to evaluate the presidency of George W. Bush close to the completion of his second term, using Stephen Skowronek's model of presidential leadership. I argue that Bush started out as a 'preemptive leader,' having to work against the hybrid regime established by the Clinton Administration (in conjunction with the Republican congressional majority in the 90s). His presidency was transformed by the terror attacks of September 2001 into a 'reconstructive leadership,' giving him the opportunity to reshape the foreign and domestic policy consensus and the major features of the international system. However, the ill-fated Iraq invasion doomed his reconstruction project to failure. Losing credibility with domestic and foreign audiences over his counterfactual interpretation of the war as part of the fight against terrorism, he basically lost "control over the meaning of what he did" (Skowronek, *Politics*). Skowronek's model does not allow for the failure of 'reconstructive' leadership. In order to explain Bush's failure, Fred Greenstein's model of presidential leadership qualities is used to show that Bush failed largely because of his cognitive style, that is, his inability, for ideological and personal reasons, to frame the foreign policy challenges he faced in a coherent manner. It is argued that the assessment of failed presidency is not premature, as the administration at midway of its second term had little room left to get itself out of the impasse in which it found itself after the Iraq invasion. Also in domestic policy, it had exhausted most of its options.

MARTIN THUNERT

"Was war mit Amerika los? Die politische Landschaft der USA in der Ära George W. Bush"

ABSTRACT: The article discusses variations of two competing interpretations of recent changes in the American political landscape and confronts them with several counter-narratives about preferences and attitudes of the American electorate: first, the thesis of a politically polarized America ('red' and 'blue') and the thesis of the United States as a 'right nation' are explored. How does polarization manifest itself, and how is it measured?

Do certain segments of the electorate—white male working-class Americans from rural areas—keep the Republicans in power by voting against their economic interests, as Thomas Frank has argued, and if so, what can Democrats do about it? Have conservative forces gained hegemony over political discourse in the United States during the George W. Bush era? One of several counter-narratives, which is analyzed in the second part of this article, holds that the thesis of a polarized America is a widely believed myth, but that the claim of America as deeply divided on fundamental political issues is a misconception created by the media and the pundit industry. The polarization thesis, as a counter-narrative put forward by political scientists such as Morris P. Fiorina argues, mistakes the polarization of the political class in Washington, DC, for the polarization of the American public, which, according to Fiorina's interpretation of survey data from various waves of National Election Studies, is not supported by the available data on voter preferences and attitudes. In a similar fashion, the thesis of working-class conservatism as a source of Republican strength is debunked by several academic political scientists. In the final part of this article, merits and pitfalls, strengths and weaknesses of the polarization thesis and its counter-narratives are weighed and discussed.

JÜRGEN WILZEWSKI

"Lessons to Be Learned: Die Bush-Doktrin, der Irakkrieg und die präventive Weltordnungspolitik der USA"

ABSTRACT: George W. Bush's concept of preventive war, which has been a centerpiece of the so-called Bush doctrine, has failed. Three years after the beginning of the Iraq war, the United States started facing the most serious foreign policy crisis since Vietnam. What lessons can be drawn from the failure of the Bush doctrine for U.S. foreign policy making after 9/11? The article focuses on the framing of the Iraq war by the administration, the failure of the national security decisionmaking system, the lack of congressional oversight, the cost sensitivities of a rational public, and the lack of international support in mapping out the prospects for U.S. world order policy after 9/11.

BERND W. KUBBIG

"Wolfowitz' Weltbild verstehen: Entwicklung und Profil eines 'demokratischen Realisten' vom Wohlstetter-Schüler zum Weltbank-Präsidenten"

ABSTRACT: This article provides an intellectual portrait of Paul Wolfowitz, the often proclaimed 'architect' of the war against Baghdad, focusing on the foreign policy views of this neo-conservative. Wolfowitz, who saw himself as a 'democratic realist,' was mainly influenced by military strategist Albert Wohlstetter, his wife Roberta, and also by former Senator Henry M. Jackson and, contrary to popular opinion, not so much by Leo Strauss. In addition, the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor is among the major factors affecting Wolfowitz's thinking. The most

important dimensions of his complex world view consist of exaggerated threat perceptions, a dichotomous thinking, a preference for military answers to political problems, and preventive strategies, which in turn include policy options as well. Later in his life, when he was influenced by his official positions in Asia, the dimensions of human rights and democratization became additional dimensions of his world view. These factors explain to a large extent Wolfowitz' strong anti-Saddam position, but also to some degree his policy as the President of the World Bank. Despite his embracing of human rights and of democratization, the 'national interest' of the United States was defined by him in a more comprehensive way. This led to different policies in terms of military intervention (as in the case of Iraq) or in terms of staying out of a conflict (in the case of Somalia).

KATJA LEIKERT RÜB

"Gescheiterte Eindämmung: Die Nonproliferationspolitik der Bush-Administration gegenüber der aufstrebenden Atommacht Iran"

ABSTRACT: A close look at the Bush administration's policy towards Iran reveals a continuation of U.S. policy to contain Tehran. Yet at the same time, there seems to be no change in policy from Tehran. The Bush administration accused Iran of working on a nuclear weapons program as well as of supporting terrorism in the Middle East. Inside the U.S. there is an ongoing debate between those favoring either engagement or isolationism. Comparing the Clinton administration's Iran policy (which contained many features of the current policy) there is no doubt about the domination of the isolationist fraction. Appeals for dialogue with Iran were only met with little response, and prominent experts judge U.S. policy here a failure. This article explores the domestic background of U.S. policy towards Iran and reveals why the focus has been on containment. Change in the U.S. policy towards Iran is not expected unless Congress drops its tough stance towards Tehran and U.S. presidents revoke the misguided 'rogue state' rhetoric.

CHRISTIAN LAMMERT

"A More Compassionate America?"—Die Sozial- und Bildungspolitik der Bush-Administration"

ABSTRACT: The essay takes a close look at George W. Bush's social and education policy reforms during his two terms as president of the United States. Part one examines the ideological concept *compassionate conservatism* and how it relates to Bush's social policy agenda. Part two analyzes the major legislative social and educational reform projects during Bush's first term. The third and final part of the essay takes stock of the social policy. In the process, the essay will focus on how successful President Bush was in the legislative process and how these reforms have affected the problem of poverty in the United

States.

MATTHIAS S. FIFKA

"Die Bush-Administration und die Reform von Corporate Governance"

ABSTRACT: In 2001 and 2002 numerous corporate scandals shook the United States. When it became public that highly acclaimed corporations such as Enron and WorldCom had manipulated their balance sheets to deceive analysts and investors, the press and the public partly blamed the Bush administration for the scandals because of its corporate-friendly policies. Moreover, close personal ties between the President as well as high-ranking officials of his staff and some of the managers involved became known. The administration was faced with two separate, but closely related problems. First, it had to dispel all speculations about a direct involvement of its members in the fraudulent practices and their attempted cover-ups within the corporations. Second, it was under pressure to initiate a reform of the corporate governance system in order to prevent further scandals. This essay examines how the Bush administration proceeded to handle both problems.

DANKO KNOTHE

"Mehr als Alibisuche? Kontinuität und Wandel in der US-Klimaschutzpolitik"

ABSTRACT: The article discusses the George W. Bush Administration's decreasing influence on U.S. climate change policy during the first and second term. It focuses on multilateral developments, government activities on the national and supranational level, and regional initiatives. After its turn to open unilateralism in 2001, President Bush was confronted with harsh criticism. The rejection of the Kyoto Protocol, however, only cashed the cheque of the Senate's Byrd/Hagel Resolution. Still opposing the Kyoto approach of multilateral negotiated reduction targets, President and Congress were re-engaging in the multilateral arena. In summer 2005, the USA launched the Asia-Pacific Climate Pact. Furthermore, through the American offer to negotiate a new multilateral agreement to regulate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the period after 2012, there was some evidence of newly developing U.S. leadership. Although many of President Bush's initiatives remained merely symbolic, I argue that they nevertheless reflected fundamental shifts in U.S. climate policy. The implementation of the Kyoto Protocol in 2005 challenged the Bush Administration's original strategy of semi-isolationism. Particularly the economic performance of the European cap and trade-system and the expected gains of investments in so-called 'clean-tech' increased proactive lobbying in the U.S. Hence we were able to observe regional initiatives and several attempts of bipartisan legislation to limit GHG emissions which confronted the Bush Administration with

mounting political pressure.

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MANUEL BRONCANO

"Strategies of Textual Subversion in Herman Melville's *Israel Potter*"

ABSTRACT: Herman Melville's *Israel Potter* (1854) has long suffered from critical disregard, whose origin is probably to be found in F. O. Matthiessen's *American Renaissance* (1941), where Matthiessen referred to Melville's eighth novel as a failure which illustrated the writer's psychological and artistic insecurity (491). On the contrary, I will argue that *Israel Potter* is not only a successful novel, but also an anticipation of some of the central themes and strategies of contemporary—let us say postmodern—fiction. One of the core aspects of my analysis will be the metafictional dimension of the novel, i.e. the various ways in which the text turns to itself as well as to other texts and therewith creates a discourse where 'reality' is supplanted by 'textuality.' Furthermore, I will show that *Israel Potter* indicates an unsuspected development from *Moby Dick* by stressing the subversive character of the epic and tragic hero's—a hero figure still embodied by Captain Ahab—metamorphosis into a bizarre and grotesque character, an anti-hero. In part, Mikhail Bakhtin's characterization of the novel as carnivalesque, subversive, and polyphonic discourse will provide the theoretical basis for my reading of Melville's controversial text.

HIRAKU FUJII

"The American Traveler's Love and Solitude: *The Atlas*, or William T. Vollmann's Pragmatics of the Double"

ABSTRACT: William T. Vollmann's novels are devoted to the interrogation of 'America,' which ultimately questions the American 'I' in the present time. A constant insight running through Vollmann's work is that this American self is not so much a free individual as a formation in power relationships. In short, Vollmann constitutes the self in the present as the doppelganger of 'America.' Reflecting this inquiry, his 1996 book *The Atlas* brings together the numerous fragments of an American world traveler's experiences. The nameless traveler always finds himself in asymmetrical relations with the 'other,' typically monetary relations with women in the Third World. In the age of globalization, the American self emerges out of the whole atlas. Yet, *The Atlas* rejects any optimistic gestures of Americanism: numerous scenes of violence and lines of difference run through the map, defining the position of the traveler where, against all idealism, he discovers himself to be a wretched white man scattering his desire and cash across the globe. In the post-Cold

War era of Americanism, Vollmann's atlas converts any optimistic view of the self into its negative double, an intolerable man in the map of power relationships. The Vollmannian doppelgänger reveals the unbearable weight of being American.

ROEL VAN DEN OEVER

"A common ear / for our deep gossip': Selfhood and Friendship in the Poetry of Allen Ginsberg and Frank O'Hara"

ABSTRACT: A dichotomous tension between selfhood and friendship underlies 1950s American poetry. On the one hand, poets wished to partake in a larger poetic community, hence they stressed their commonalities with each other. On the other hand, each poet desired to construct a separate and visible identity, achieved by emphasizing one's non-conformity. An illustration of this sameness/difference-dynamism can be found in the poetic dialogue between Allen Ginsberg and Frank O'Hara. The two poets bonded over a shared homosexual identity, while they differed on what 'kind' of homosexuality was to be preferred: Ginsberg advocated a rugged, virile hip-ness; O'Hara personified an effeminate, campy queer-ness. This distinction between hip and queer was laid down by Ginsberg in his early poem "In Society," and later reiterated by him in a *Gay Sunshine* interview. In his mock-manifesto "Personism" and the poem "Adieu to Norman, Bon Jour to Joan and Jean-Paul," O'Hara adopted the vocabulary, playing the part of the giddy queen in opposition to an uptight Ginsberg. The distinction received its fullest treatment in Ginsberg's elegy for O'Hara, "City Midnight Junk Strains," which presents a campy and chatty O'Hara, a socialite queen *pur sang*, who constitutes the oppositional other to Ginsberg's hip self.

MICHAEL KAMMEN

Forum: "Reflections on European History and Memory in Exile"

ABSTRACT: This article provides an examination of the transnational memories of eleven modern historians who became eminent masters in their fields in the US: Russian-born Michael Karpovich and Alexander Gerschenkron, Romanian-born Mircea Eliade and Eugen Weber, German-born Felix Gilbert, George Mosse, Peter Gay, Fritz Stern, Saul Friedländer, Hungarian-born John Lukacs, and US-born Lucy Dawidowicz. Their presence at American universities brought a welcome cosmopolitanism and international scholarship. All became influential teachers at their institutions and in some instances policy-makers as well. Their recollections illuminate personal rites of passage but also the challenge of carrying out creative work before, during, and after World War II, most notably concerned with National Socialism and the Holocaust, but also political as well as economic revolutions.

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