

Re-Configurations of Southern Literature: Daniel J. Pizappi, Chair
Room A; Friday, April 7; 9:00 am

- Daniel Altenburg; Sean F. Munro

Irony as Mask: Defiguration and Figuration Through Emotional Enactment in Southern Poetry

In the post-fact era, the Deep South is often the most complicit and simultaneously cognizant of oppression and hate—both within its borders and nationally. Because it is historically oppressed, its people and artists are aware of the rhetorical techniques employed by oppressors. Irony, under the guise of apophasis, is often used to propagate hate; however, as it goes misidentified, as euphemism, as irony, as pun, as humor, as not what one meant to say, the speaker is relieved of consequence and context. Deep South writers, specifically southern poets, seem *haunted* by this current and past tradition of nuanced subjugation and their subsequent repression, manifesting itself in various, sometimes avant-garde forms. Often overlooked and/or regarded as too non-traditional, southern poets, contemporary and not, are repeatedly the first and most lasting responders to oppressive rhetoric. By inspecting contemporary poets, such as Abraham Smith, CD Wright, Frank Stanford, Lara Glenum, Jericho Brown, Toi Derricote, Rachel Eliza Giffiths, Clint Smith, and Rodney Jones, we aim to track and inspect any consistent rhetorical and poetic methodologies for (1) undermining oppression, and (2) accurately representing an oppressed people. In doing so, and by working through the language of Southern poets, we will explore irony's current predicament, figurative language's failings in the media, and how these poets reassess truth, experience, and figuration through their own and others' emotional enactments.

Daniel Altenburg holds a MFA in poetry from the University of Arizona (2011), and is currently pursuing his PhD in creative writing at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, where he teaches English and works as an assistant poetry editor for *Rougarou*. His poetry can be found via *Spork Press*, *Caffeine Dirge*, *The Offending Adam*, and *Deluge*.

Sean F. Munro writes, teaches, lives, & listens in New Orleans. Some of his other poems appear in *Brooklyn Review*, *The Turnip Truck(s)*, *ILK*, *Spork*, and elsewhere.

- Saul Lemerond

"Jimmy Smiley's Jumping Frog" as Artemus Ward Parody

"The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County" was originally published in the form of a letter addressed to Artemus Ward and signed by Mark Twain. This original epistolary form is important to note because it was a form Artemus Ward (Charles Farrar Browne) was known for. Considering the commonality of form, as well as several other humor techniques present in both the "Jumping Frog" sketch and Ward's letters (i.e. deadpan narrations from uneducated and rural males who speak in vernacular and use non sequiturs, comic digressions, and political satire to bore an uninterested audience), it is clear that Twain has written parody of Ward. This illuminates two levels of irony present in the "Jumping Frog" sketch. We see the first imbedded in the fact that (fictional) Ward has sent (narrator) Twain to talk to Simon Wheeler, who is essentially a proxy of Ward. The second level reveals itself when we realize (writer) Twain has written a parody of Browne, and then addressed it to his comic persona (Ward). This paper provides evidence for these ideas through a comparison of the narrative and comic devices present in Mark Twain's "Jimmy Smiley's Jumping Frog," and Charles Farrar Browne's "Artemus Ward's Letter to the Prince of Wales."

- Jason Knight

Hello From the Other Side: Epistolarity as a Global Medium

Epistolarity is a special form of direct address. Focusing on the necessity and uniqueness of this special form of communication, my presentation will explore the spaces, both physical and mental, involved in letter-writing and how epistolarity as a genre allows for disclosure, exploration, and investigation of correspondents' past experiences, which have shaped their present lives.

Historiographic metafiction, as Linda Hutcheon has termed it, is a genre obsessed with revisiting and reinvestigating individual and collective pasts, and it connects the Postmodern to the Southern Gothic. Hutcheon also uses the phrase "presence of the past" to describe how people's lives are influenced by what they have been through. Many a Southern Gothic novel and short story are premised on loss or tragedy in the past that continues to influence the present mindsets, and conversations, of the characters.

Outside the realm of fiction, people still rely, perhaps more heavily than ever, on the epistolary form to share their thoughts, feelings, and experiences. While fewer people may write out a letter with pen and paper, more are turning to other methods of communicating in this form: text messaging, email, and social media.

The oral storytelling tradition of the South; the postmodern impulse to revisit, revise, and reuse; and the compulsion of historiographic metafiction to investigate and reinvestigate the past through storytelling come together in the space of the letter, or more poignantly, in the shared space that exists between correspondents. Epistolarity is a global medium that provides the space for a global language: a language of shared experiences, past and present, along with hopes for the future.

A short reading of original epistolary nonfiction will follow.

Jason Knight is a PhD candidate at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. He is interested in Southern Gothic literature, the Theatre of the Absurd, and Epistolarity. He is drawn to people and characters who inhabit the margins. His work has been published in *Fermata Publishing*, *East Coast Literary Review*, *The Southwestern Review*, and elsewhere.

Intersecting Souths: Exploring the Gulf South and the Caribbean: Jeanna Mason, Chair Room B; Friday, April 7; 9:00 am

- Kristina Gibby

Erna Brodber's 'Louisiana': "Two places can make children!"

Recent publications *Look Away! The U.S. South in New World Studies* (2004) and *Just Below South: Intercultural Performance in the Caribbean and the U.S. South* call for an exploration of the many similarities between the U.S. South, the Caribbean, and Latin America, including a *shared* history of slavery, plantation societies and economies, and climate. Jamaican author Erna Brodber's *Louisiana* accomplishes what these texts seek to achieve on a theoretical level.

Brodber creates a link between the U.S. and the Caribbean through an uncanny repetition of one name: Louisiana. The novel is about synthesis and relation, specifically between African American and Caribbean people. This is emphasized by the friendship between two characters, one from St. Mary, Louisiana, U.S.A., and one from Louisiana, St. Mary, Jamaica. This mirroring reinforces the shared traumatic history of African slaves and their descendants in the United States and in the Caribbean islands. In the novel the two branches come together in New

Orleans, Louisiana, a site of cultural and spiritual crossroads. Brodber emphasizes the commonalities between African Americans and Afro-Caribbeans in order to illustrate a shared folklore and spiritual epistemology that opposes hegemonic forms of knowledge. This is accomplished as the protagonist, Ella Townsend—an African American anthropologist, is reconciled to her Jamaican heritage. Hers is a spiritual journey. Ella is instructed by two female spirits, Louise and Anna, who engender Ella's reconciliation with herself, her community, and her ancestral legacy. This reconciliation is brought about through a relational understanding (à la Glissant) of Ella's "American" identity, leading her to take on the name Louisiana. As Louisiana, Ella recuperates her people's effaced history and acts as a bridge between the past and the present, the dead and the living, and the U.S. and Jamaica.

Kristina Gibby is a PhD candidate in Comparative Literature at Louisiana State University. She is interested in a comparative approach to the literature of the Americas, specifically contemporary female writers who explore traumatic histories and the process of recuperating obfuscated and repressed experiences. She is also concerned with the intersection between modern art and literature in Europe and the Americas.

- Maarten Zwieters

Jim Crow Caribbean: Authoritarian Networks in the Gulf South

During the Cold War, segregationists from the U.S. South cooperated with dictators in the Caribbean, thus forming networks of authoritarian regimes in the so-called American Mediterranean. Jim Crow apologists were not only committed to suppressing civil rights at home, but also to countering left-wing activities abroad, especially in the Gulf of Mexico. My paper examines how planter-politicians from the Deep U.S. South supported anticommunist rulers in the Caribbean and Latin America during the 1950s and 1960s. In 1958 for instance, U.S. senators James Eastland (D-MS) and William Jenner (R-IN) visited the Dominican Republic, where they lavishly praised the country's dictator, Rafael Trujillo, for his "leadership, for freedom, for capitalism, and for free enterprise." Eastland owned a sprawling plantation in the Mississippi Delta and was known for his outspoken opposition to progressive groups such as labor unions and civil rights activists. At the same time, he was a strong supporter of authoritarian regimes around the world, including the Trujillo government. On the Senate floor, Eastland teamed up with fellow segregationists such as Allen Ellender of Louisiana to make sure sugar quotas allocated to the Dominican Republic would not be cut back. In my paper, I want to address how Deep South segregationists, sometimes in cooperation with conservative Republicans, extended their commitment to segregation, anticommunism, and big (agri)business into the Caribbean, thus turning their white supremacist cause into a transnational fight for the traditional Southern Way of Life.

Maarten Zwieters is assistant professor in contemporary history and American Studies at the University of Groningen, the Netherlands. He is the author of *Senator James Eastland: Mississippi's Jim Crow Democrat*, which came out with Louisiana State University Press in 2015, and has published in *Southern Cultures* and *The Southern Quarterly*.

- Jennie Lightweis-Goff

Going Global, Getting National: The Caribbean Turn in Southern Literary Studies

The spatial signifiers of John Wharton Lowe's Calypso Magnolia: The Crosscurrents of

Caribbean and Southern Literature (2016) confront the book's readers with an asymmetry. Maneuvered into an intimate embrace by Lowe's able literary scholarship, the Caribbean and the American South are everywhere present, but in decidedly uneven proportions. While swaths of the Caribbean are represented – in the forms of Haiti, Cuba, Mexico, and Jamaica – Lowe distills the U.S. South into a quite narrow slice of the region: Florida and Louisiana, the states whose Southernness is most often contested in the national imaginary. Keith Cartwright's *Sacral Grooves, Limbo Gateways: Travels in Deep Southern Time* (2013), a text that similarly works to remap the U.S. South as part of the extended Caribbean, bears the same geographical disorientation. In the Caribbean and Africa, readers cover the waterfront. In America, they mostly circumnavigate Florida. While Florida is the only of the fifty states with two coasts to circumnavigate, it is scarcely a satisfying metonym for either the U.S. or the U.S. South, "creolized" as both undoubtedly are. Cartwright and Lowe's books are the signal texts of the "Caribbean Turn" in Southern Literary Studies, a pivot that has enabled the sub-discipline to travel from the provincial South to what James L. Peacock has called "the South in the World." Taking up the various strands of the "Caribbean turn" in Southern Studies, one is left with a quandary: does the Caribbean turn unsettle American exceptionalism by demonstrating the porousness of borders? Does it affirm Southern exceptionalism, by locating Grand Guignol racism and plantation economies as sutures between the Caribbean and the South, rather than the Caribbean and the United States?

While I have no fear of the discipline's end, I would like to offer a presentation that explores the ends of the Caribbean Turn. I use this presentation to ask how the Caribbean turn advances the changing discipline of Southern Studies, how it adjudicates the claims for the representative and/or exceptional statuses of the Gulf South that it centers as the South. Considering the proliferation of approaches to Southern Studies and of unexpected Souths within that framing, one might conclude that the New Southern Studies has considered every potential demarcation of Southernness except Cardinal Directions. As such, I suspect that the most radical turn in the sub-discipline might take us not to Ghana, Brazil, or the "mire" of Keith Cartwright's work, but to U.S. poet Wallace Stevens's "The Idea of Order in Key West," which, after all, posits the Southernmost point of the continental United States as catalyst for making meaning, making song, making location, and making voice. Beginning with a close reading of Stevens's Key West, I offer, in the poet's wake, *Thirteen Ways of Looking at the White-Crowned Parrot*.

The Central American indigene replaces the blackbird in order to shift our perspective on the Circum-Caribbean, allowing us to gaze up and down, but most especially inward, to determine what rendering the Deep South Global affords scholars. Impressionistic but political, interested in both the materiality and ideology of space, the presentation asks how far scholars pivot when they purport to turn from the national to the global.

Jennie Lightweis-Goff is an Instructor of English at the University of Mississippi, where she teaches Southern, African-American, and American Literatures of the last three centuries. She earned a Ph.D. in English at the University of Rochester. *Blood at the Root: Lynching as American Cultural Nucleus* (2011), the monograph based on her dissertation research, won the SUNY Press Dissertation / First Book Prize in African American Studies. Currently, she is at work on two projects that center Southern cities in U.S. urban history: one project works through the ablated archive of urban slavery, while a second considers the "Southern Littoral" of Charleston, Savannah, and New Orleans in twentieth and twenty-first century literatures. Articles from these projects have appeared in *American Literature* (2014), *Signs* (2015), and *Minnesota*

review (2015). "Interior Travelogues and 'Inside Views'," her article on the urban slave narrative, won the Louis D. Rubin, Jr. Prize from the Society for the Study of Southern Literature.

- Wandeka Gayle

Afro-Creole Spiritism in Caribbean and Southern Literature

This paper draws similarities between the mythology, folklore and non-Christian spirituality in both Trinidadian writer, C. L. R. James' *Minty Alley* and Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. Both works express a tension between the professed respectability of Eurocentric Christianity and the denigrated Afrocentric beliefs systems which offers a less static notion of "God." In *Minty Alley*, the characters of different classes and color in the No 2 boarding house vacillate between the "rightness" of their colonial religious indoctrination and the "evil" represented through the "seer man," a remnant of their near-erased African heritage. Likewise, Hurston, who in her anthropological research collected folklore of southern and Caribbean blacks, offers a concept of divinity only through the natural world – the moon, the hurricane, the trees – thus, rejecting the notion God as masculine and singular. John Wharton Lowe states in *Calypso Magnolia: The Crosscurrents of Caribbean and Southern Literature*, both West Indians and southern blacks share similar cultural mores because of merging contact zones during influxes of immigration, but especially because of their shared, fragmented past. Keith Cartwright in *Sacred Grooves, Limbo Gateways: Travels in Deep Southern Time, Afro-Creole Authority* offers similar connections between the creole zones of the Caribbean, the U.S. South, and West Africa: "The motifs of the sacred, the sublime, and the spiritual are called upon in order to demonstrate that the fragmentation and displacement experienced during diaspora and slavery created a unity that brings together these geographically discrete morsels" (Loichot). As a creative writer, I will share a brief excerpt of my fiction that expresses this religious tension experienced by a Caribbean immigrant living in the South.

Wandeka Gayle is a doctoral candidate at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, emphasizing in Creative Writing Fiction. She is a Kimbilio Fellow and a Callaloo Fellow, whose work focuses on Afro-Caribbean immigrant experiences. The former journalist from Jamaica received her MA in English from Andrews University in 2011. Her writing can be seen in the *Jamaica Gleaner*, *Life-Info Magazine*, *Susumba* and *Spectrum*.

**Digital Research in the Global South: Re/discovering Louisiana Through the Filipino Community: Randy Gonzales, Chair
Room C; Friday, April 7; 9:00 am**

Filipinos have resided in Louisiana since the 18th century, when Filipino sailors left their Spanish ships to settle in the marshes along the coast, setting up communities that encouraged future Filipino migration to the state. In 1870, they formed the first Filipino community organization in the United States. Since then, Louisiana has seen a number of Filipino organizations come and go without significant research into either the organizations or the communities they represent. Filipino La. , a digital research project <www.filipinola.com>, was formed to preserve the history and culture of these communities, and to encourage further research into their development within the particular Louisiana context. The project includes online public resources: 1) a multimedia archive that includes community photographs, oral

histories, and documents; 2) a Wikipedia-style encyclopedia; and 3) a blog that documents the academic work surrounding the project. The multiple publications bring attention to the population and make primary resources available online, creating a landscape of public knowledge that promotes further research. This panel will include several presentations that use Filipino La. as a resource for investigations into the local Filipino community and others that look at the digital methodologies used in the project to conduct and share community research.

- Samantha Sawvel

Exploring Culture in Filipinox Zines

An investigation into the relationship of second-generation Filipino Americans to Filipino community organizations.

Sam Sawvel is a 2nd generation Filipinox-American born and raised in Lafayette, Louisiana. She is currently a sophomore majoring in Sociology and minoring in Gender and Sexuality Studies at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Sam's ongoing reclamation of her Filipina heritage as well as her involvement in the intersectional feminism movement is what led her to her topic of interest: queer subcultures within the Filipino-American community.

- Christina Hernandez

Keeping the Faith: Catholicism in the Filipino-American Community of Acadiana

An investigation of Filipino communities in Louisiana that looks at the impact the physical and cultural landscape of Louisiana has on the formation and sustainability of Filipino community groups, and/or the impact community organizations have on the social, political, spiritual, and cultural life of their members.

Christina Hernandez is a 3rd generation Filipino-American and was raised in a Catholic household. She is currently a senior studying Linguistics and has a strong interest in languages and cultures. Curiosity about her own heritage is what has led to her interest in the local Filipino-American community.

- Kassie Richard

Designing Filipino American History for a Public Audience

A report on the digital research and publication methods employed by Filipino La., including the collaborative ethnographic methods that involve the community in the creation of archives and the interpretation of digital artifacts and the use of digital media to build community and institutional support for the project.

Kassie Richard is pursuing an MA in English with a concentration in Professional Writing at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette (UL). Kassie holds a BA in Early Childhood Education with an add-on in Library Science from UL. She is interested in writing and design for a public audience, and professional uses of social media.

- Randy Gonzales

Culture and Cultural Interactions of Filipinos in Louisiana

A historical overview of early Filipino community formations and their dependence on other marginalized communities, including maroons, pirates, Islenos, Native Americans, and Chinese entrepreneurs.

Randy Gonzales is an Assistant Professor of English at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. His work investigates and documents the Filipino American experience in Louisiana, and includes a digital project, Filipino La. <www.filipinola.com>, which preserves the stories of Filipino communities in the state.

Creative Plenary; John McNally, Moderator

Room C; Friday, April 7; 10:45 am

- Sadie Hoagland, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Disrupted Narratives: An Experiment in Erasure

Disrupted Narratives: An Experiment in Erasure is a visual narrative made up of excerpted text from William Faulkner's Absalom, Absalom and images from Kara Walker's My Complement, My Enemy, My Oppressor, My Love. The project, from a creative standpoint, is one of experimentation and erasure. What happens when Faulkner's already circuitous language is fragmented and isolated from its narrative as a whole and placed in relation to an African American artist's images of slave society? From a theoretical standpoint, I was interested in themes that continually resurfaced in global south narratives. Themes that included a significant relationship with the past, illegitimacy produced by societies founded on oppression, a sense of immobility in time and place, observation of oral tradition, and an acute awareness of the Other. I was particularly focused on this latter motif, and the opposing dichotomies of black/white, South/North, real/mythic and the ways in which both Faulkner and Walker play with dissolving and revising these binaries through various modes of revelation. Edouard Glissant, in his book Faulkner, Mississippi, refers to the "relationship between the narrated and the unsayable" as a key feature of Faulkner's work. Walker's use of silhouettes also plays with this tension between what is revealed and what, in the process of revelation, is obscured. For Faulkner, even as narrative voices dissolve, a story persists as an inevitability. For Walker, the contrast of black and white is the most striking feature of her art and her silhouettes place oppressor/slave relationships at the forefront of identity. Considering these underlying preoccupations present in Faulkner and Walker, I wondered what would happen when the two were placed together and what, if any, narrative would erupt. I won't elaborate on my artistic process here, but the result was in fact a new story that reinforces the above dialectics but also reveals an additional theme, that of white guilt. The collaged narrative turns back on itself, the unsayable opens up, and the oppressor's past is laid bare.

Sadie Hoagland has a PhD in fiction from the University of Utah where she worked as editor for Quarterly West. She has an MA in Creative Writing from UC Davis. Her work has appeared in Slush Pile Magazine, The Black Herald, MOJO, Alice Blue Review, Oyez Review, Grist Journal, The South Dakota Review, Sakura Review, and Passages North, among others. She currently teaches Creative Writing at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. More about her

can be found at www.sadiehoagland.com.

- Charles Richard, University of Louisiana at Lafayette
In the Mind of the Maker: Imagining Louisiana Fiction

C.E. Richard will present his short film "In the Mind of the Maker," which documents the role of memory and imagination in traditional Louisiana boat building. The film demonstrates some of the ways in which even nonfiction is an imaginary construct.

C.E. Richard is the English Department's Joseph P. Montiel Endowed Professor, specializing in creative nonfiction and film studies. He has written, produced, and/or directed roughly two dozen documentary films for PBS and other venues. His collection of essays about coastal erosion and cultural loss, *Land's End*, is forthcoming from McFarland Books.

- J Bruce Fuller, Stanford University
Epic Austerity: Long Form Lyrics

In almost every definition of the lyric mode of poetry, the idea of brevity is one of the critical foundations. But our ideas of what makes a poem "brief" or "minor" have changed since the mid-20th century. Likewise, the amount of narrative that exists in what we would now call lyric poetry is much more pronounced than in previous eras. Storytelling and narrative are important aspects of the southern experience and mindset. How then does a southern poet reconcile the lyric and narrative modes? How can a southern poet engage with the lyric tradition, yet also write in longer forms and with narrative arc? I will examine some recent long form lyrics and show how I reconcile these issues in my own work.

J. Bruce Fuller is a Louisiana native, and is a Wallace Stegner Fellow in Poetry at Stanford University. His chapbooks include *The Dissenter's Ground* (Hyacinth Girl Press 2016), and *Flood*, winner of the 2013 Swan Scythe Chapbook Contest. He is co-editor of *Vision/Verse 2009-2013: An Anthology of Poetry*. He received a MFA from McNeese and a Ph.D. from UL-Lafayette.

Creative Writing and Performing Arts: A Dialogue (Roundtable): Dayana Stetco, Moderator

Room A; Friday, April 7; 1:45 pm

- Krista DeBehnke, University of Louisiana at Lafayette; English

Krista Marie DeBehnke is a poet, playwright, and a PhD candidate at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Hailing from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, she received her BA in Creative Writing and Film Studies from UW-Milwaukee, and went on to complete her MFA in poetry at Eastern Washington University's Inland Northwest Center for Writers in Spokane, Washington. Since then, she has been accepted to the Bread Loaf/Orion Magazine Environmental Conference in Ripton, Vermont, and the Tin House Winter Poetry Workshop in Oregon. She is the winner of the Dr. James H. Wilson/ Paul T. Nolan Creative Writing Award in Drama in 2015 and was nominated for the Association of Writers and Writing Programs Intro Journals Award in 2014. Her drama and poetry have appeared or are forthcoming in journals such as *Portland Review*, *New American Press*, *Rock & Sling* and *Railtown Almanac*, among others. She is the editor-in-chief of an online ekphrastic magazine, *Oculus Vox*.

- Brooke Larson, University of Louisiana at Lafayette; English

Brooke Larson holds an MFA in Creative Writing from Columbia University, and is currently a PhD student in Poetry at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Her poems and essays have most recently appeared or are forthcoming in *The Offbeat*, *Foothill Journal*, *Gravel*, *The Swamp*, *Cactus Heart*, and *Dialogue Journal*. Often she runs away to teach primitive survival skills as a wilderness guide in Arizona's Sonoran Desert.

- Dayana Stetco, University of Louisiana at Lafayette, English

Dayana Stetco is a Professor of English and Department Head at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Her illuminated manuscript, *In Place of This*, written with Shannon R. Miller, was published by Akinoga Press in 2017. Her trilogy of plays, *The Falling*, was released by Yellow Flag Press in 2016. Her book, *Seducing Velasquez and Other Plays*, was released by Ahadada Books in 2009. Her plays have been produced in the U.S., her native country, Romania, and the UK. Her fiction, plays, essays, and translations have appeared in *Required*, *Two Lines*, *Packingtown Review*, *BathHouse Hypermedia Journal*, *Spelk*, *Emergency Almanac*, *Metrotimes*,

Eleven Eleven, *Masque & Spectacle*, and others. She is the Artistic Director of The Milena Group, an interdisciplinary physical theatre ensemble she formed in 2000.

- Lukas Guilbeau, University of Louisiana at Lafayette; Performing Arts - Theatre

Lukas Guilbeau is a senior in the performing arts program at UL Lafayette. He will be graduating in May with a BFA in Theatre, and focused on technology and design during his time at the university. He is also currently the President of the College of the Arts in the Student Government Association. Throughout his time at ULL, he has worked in a design and technology capacity for numerous productions put on by the university as well as in the community.

- Shannon Miller, University of Louisiana at Lafayette; Performing Arts - Theatre

Shannon R. Miller is an Assistant Professor of Theatre at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. He has an MFA in Theatre Design and Technology from the University of Southern Mississippi. His professional experience includes work with Utah Shakespeare Festival, Theatre West Virginia, Mill Mountain Theatre, Kentucky Repertory Theatre, Jefferson Performing Arts, Southern Repertory Theatre, and Maltz Jupiter Theatre.

Narrative, Language, and Intent: *Gnei Soraya Zarook*, chair

Room C; Friday, April 7; 1:45 pm

- Chase Berenson

The Changing Societal Conception of Gender in Baton Rouge in the Twentieth Century as Measured by Historic Headstones

Louisiana is fiercely proud of its many cultures, as well as the unique history that has led to the state's current diverse population. One of the many ways in which Louisiana keeps this history alive is through the maintenance of historical cemeteries, some of which date back hundreds of years. Baton Rouge's historic Magnolia Cemetery, just east of Downtown, is a beautiful monument to the lives of so many people who have made the city great over the past centuries.

The first half of the twentieth century was a tumultuous time for all levels of society in the United States. Those five decades saw two World Wars, Prohibition, and the Great

Depression. However, they also witnessed the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution granting women the right to vote, as well as the impact of Rosie the Riveter when women flooded into the traditionally male workspace. Almost every aspect of the average American's life had changed during the turbulent first half of the twentieth century, and it is possible to prove that those changes even continued after death and impacted the headstones that were placed by women's graves.

By analyzing two populations of historic headstones at Baton Rouge's Magnolia Cemetery (one group from before 1900 and one from 1950-1975), it is possible to discover how society's changing gender narrative in the early 1900s was reflected in changing proportions of headstones that identified women as themselves after their death.

This paper, originally written for a graduate-level statistics course, uses original research, a statistical analysis of proportions, and the historical and societal contexts of life in Louisiana in the first half of the twentieth century to show how the language of gender identity altered Baton Rouge's perception of the city's leading ladies after they had departed from society.

Chase Berenson is a second-year student in the Flores MBA Program at the E.J. Ourso College of Business at Louisiana State University, where he is specializing in Global Entrepreneurship and Management Consulting. He received his Bachelor of Arts from Vassar College in Urban Studies, with concentrations in Sociology and Geography.

- Winston Ho

- The Chinese Tomb at Cypress Grove*

The Chinese Tomb at Cypress Grove Cemetery, also known as the Soon On Tong Vault and the Chinese Cemetery, was built in 1904 by the Chinese Cantonese community in New Orleans. It was originally built for the temporary interment of the Chinese in the city, until individual tombs could be built in the hometown of the deceased, and arrangements could be made to ship the remains back to the families in Guangdong province. As the Chinese did not have access to Chinese tomb builders, they commissioned local craftsmen to build the Cypress Grove Tomb, resulting in a hybrid tomb. It exhibits the features of a Chinese tomb in function, but it is also a New Orleans society tomb, with the same characteristics as other immigrant society tombs in the city. After the Communist Revolution in 1949, the Chinese began burying their dead in the Cypress Grove Tomb permanently, and by the 1970s, the Chinese were purchasing single family tombs in nearby Greenwood and Metairie Cemeteries, just like their non-Chinese neighbors. The last interment in the Cypress Grove Tomb took place in 1991. The Chinese Tomb at Cypress Grove is one of the oldest surviving Chinese structures in the American South, and it is an excellent example of the progression of the Chinese American community from an overseas Chinese colony to a truly American community. The Cypress Grove Tomb is exceptional, not because it is a Chinese tomb, but because it is a typical New Orleans tomb.

Winston Ho is a graduate of history and Chinese language from Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey, under the Department of History and the Department of Asian Languages and Cultures, specializing in early twentieth-century China and Chinese American history in New Orleans. He has previously studied at the Mandarin Training Center (MTC) at National Taiwan Normal University, Beijing Language and Culture University (BCLU), the University of Mississippi, the University of New Orleans (UNO), and Benjamin Franklin High School in New Orleans.

Mr. Ho has previously taught Chinese at the Academy of Chinese Studies in New Orleans and at St. Mary's Dominican High School in New Orleans. He is currently applying to graduate school. Mr. Ho is the son of Taiwanese parents and a native of New Orleans.

- Mateja Pavlic; Brooke O. Breaux

Credibility of Accented Speakers: The Influence of Familiarity and Prior Exposure

Language attitudes research has shown that credibility judgments towards foreign-accented speakers tend to be less positive than attitudes towards native-accented speakers (e.g., Lev-Ari & Keysar, 2010). Moreover, credibility of foreign-accented speakers seems to be based on how close the non-native speech is to native speech, with foreign-accented speakers being rated as less credible when they have heavier accents and more credible when they have milder accents (e.g., Nabei, 2014). This is problematic, considering the negative impact that lower perceptions of credibility could have on a foreign-accented speaker's career (e.g., Tsalikis, DeShields, & LaTour, 1991). Some researchers have proposed that these perceptions could be related to social factors, such as in-group/out-group membership, stereotyping, or prejudice (e.g., Neuliep & Speten-Hansen, 2013). However, other researchers have suggested that these perception may be based more on cognitive factors, such as processing difficulty. For example, research has shown that when foreign-accented speech is difficult to understand (i.e., low intelligibility) and difficult to comprehend (i.e., low comprehensibility), it is associated with a decrease in credibility (e.g., DeMeo, 2012). One cognitive variable that has not been explored in depth is familiarity. Our hypothesis is that when people are asked to judge the truthfulness of statements, they will produce lower credibility ratings in response to the same information presented in an unfamiliar, foreign accent as compared to a familiar, regional accent. Furthermore, we predict that brief exposure to the unfamiliar, foreign accent will result in increased ratings of credibility. Support for our predictions would suggest that there is a relatively easy way to reduce the credibility bias associated with foreign-accented speech; one that could be implemented in a variety of settings, including cultural sensitivity training programs.

Mateja Pavlic is MS in Psychology student at the UL Lafayette and is currently finishing the coursework and working on her Master's thesis.

Brooke O. Breaux is a lifelong resident of Lafayette with a Ph.D. in Cognitive Science and is an Assistant Professor of Psychology at UL Lafayette where she directs the Cognition and Psycholinguistics (CaP) Research Lab.

- Max Magana

"No way, Jose" or "It's Ok, hombre"? The Role of Intentionality in Moral Violations in Intergroup Relations

Does morality matter in intergroup threat? Specifically, does the perceived intent of illegal Latino immigrants matter in attitudes towards building a wall between Mexico and the United States? This project explores the effects that appraisal of the intentionality (i.e., intentional vs. unintentional) of illegal Latino immigrants when nonimmigrants perceive symbolic threat. There are two central hypotheses: 1) perception of intentional norm violation elicits emotions that motivate punishment (e.g., preference for escalating deportation) and (2) perception of unintentional violation elicits emotions that motivate reconciliation (e.g., preference for increasing the accessibility of citizenship). Perceptions of intentional violations and associated

emotions (e.g., anger) motivate punishment whereas perceptions of unintentional violations and associated emotions (e.g., compassion) motivate reconciliation. Including moral appraisal of immigration and emotions involved in symbolic threat yields theoretical expansion. Prior literature does not account the moral dimension of symbolic threat despite that immigration and the cultural change it entails suggest threats to “traditional” norms and values. Moreover, emotions in the study of intergroup threat shed light on intergroup relations: they imply intergroup conflict or potential intergroup cooperation.

**Home, Body, and Place in Poetry: Khirsten Doolan; *Chair*
Room D; Friday, April 7; 1:45 pm**

- Elizabeth Gardner

Hypothesis of Blood, Empire of Words: Biracial Bodies in the Global South

In “Throwaway Bodies in the Poetry of Natasha Trethewey,” Jill Goad argues that in poems from *Native Guard* Trethewey’s “racial ambiguity [as a child] makes her a throwaway body, an overlooked part of history” (276) 1 . However, with Thrall, Trethewey is trying to readjust the paradigm. By writing ekphrastic poetry about images of biracial bodies, most of which are both global and historical in scope, Trethewey is demanding that we re-examine the overlooked biracial figure. Furthermore, I argue that by positioning these paintings (and this history) as integral to understanding her identity as a biracial southern woman, Trethewey asserts that these bodies are not throwaway and that they are, in fact, necessary for understanding both herself and the South as it is positioned in a global context.

Elizabeth Gardner is a first-year Ph.D. student at Louisiana State University. Her research interests include southern literature and women’s and gender studies. In addition, Elizabeth teaches general education courses that focus on developing students’ critical reading and writing skills. When not working, Elizabeth enjoys attempting to bake recipes she finds on Pinterest and cuddling with her dog Charlie.

- Jennifer Van Alstyne

Female Poets and Southern Identity: On the Place of Poetics of Natasha Trethewey, Ellen Bryant, and C.D. Wright

Natasha Trethewey, former poet laureate of the United States, explored her own identity through her poetics in collections like *Native Guard*, and historical southern memory in Belloq’s *Ophelia*. Her work brings the history of the South to life through narrative poetry. C.D. Wright, who passed only recently, was born and raised in the Ozarks in Arkansas. In an interview for *Jacket Magazine*, Write says, “I have never belonged to a notable element of writers who identified with one another partly because I come from Arkansas, specifically that part of Arkansas known for its resistance-to- joining, a non-urban environment where readily identifiable groups and sub-groups are less likely to form.” Ellen Bryant Voight, who grew up in Virginia and wrote largely about the rural south. And, while Edward Hirsch called Bryant Voight’s work “a Southerner’s devotion to family and a naturalist’s devotion to the physical world,” this talk will seek to examine ways in which she uses place to document and explore the landscapes around her. Both C.D. Wright and Natasha Trethewey use their poetry to enter a place of history and politics. This paper seeks to unveil the interchange between a region wrought with layers of history and ghosts. These female poets, experts at their craft, hold onto a strong sense of their childhood regions and write them into a more vivid and three-dimensional being than one might experience passing

through. They open the non-Southern reader to experiences of their southern identities and, through their national recognition, bring wider perception to the southern region.

Jennifer van Alstyne has been published numerous journals including *The Foundling Review*, *Paper Nautilus*, *Poetry Quarterly*, and *Whiskey Traveler*. Her chapbook, *Pelt*, was a finalist for the *Paper Nautilus* Vella Chapbook Award. She holds an M.F.A. from Naropa University where she was the Jack Kerouac Fellow and is currently a graduate fellow in Linguistics at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

- Tova Kranz

Natasha Trethewey's "Pastoral" and the Deconstruction of the Fugitive Pastoral

In Southern literature, land has an almost mythic power attached to it, as it is a defining aspect of a region whose economy and culture were built upon what the land yielded, as well as the free labor attained through slavery. Within contemporary Southern literature, however, there is a tendency towards depicting the South as a place of “poverty and problems” rather than the image of a South of “moonlight and magnolias,” as David A. Davis noted in his introduction to the Fall 2014 issue of the Society for the Study of Southern Literature’s newsletter. This shift to producing more realistic views of the South results in a movement from the nostalgia for a former South or Souths that prompted movements like the Fugitive Poets and, following them, the Agrarians, who eulogized a South from before the Civil War. This nostalgia is seen in poems including Allen Tate’s “Ode to the Confederate Dead” and multiple poems by Robert Penn Warren. In this paper, Natasha Trethewey’s poem “Pastoral” is analyzed with regards to its deconstruction of the pastoral as depicted by the Fugitive Poets of the early twentieth century. Rather than appearing disadvantaged as a result of economic and environmental factors, the pastoral South in Trethewey’s poem is examined thoroughly. The poem’s speaker notes and underlines what the Fugitives must ignore: the willingness to disavow or obscure the racial tensions inherent in Southern culture, the conflicts of race and class that earlier forms of the pastoral attempt to obscure in favor of one coherent Southern narrative. Trethewey herself notes her poetry “comes from what [she observes] in the world 2 . This essay examines Trethewey’s poem as a critique of the Southern Pastoral, pointing out its artifice, as well as highlighting what the pastoral fails to address, namely the issue of race. The poem “Pastoral” functions as a critique of the pastoral mode as evoked by movements such as the Fugitive Poets by examining and revealing the artifice of the pastoral while also emphasizing the issue of race, which is often downplayed or overlooked in pastoral literature from the South.

Exploring the Global Other: Ami E. Stearns, *Chair*

Room A; Friday, April 7; 3:30 pm

- Hannah Ritorto

Inverse Anthropomorphism and the Bond with the Southern Natural World: An Ecocritical Analysis of Ron Rash's Serena

The natural world is a pervasive element of Ron Rash’s fiction and poetry, and by performing an ecocritical analysis of his works, it is possible to glean insight into the impact of our treatment of the natural world. In “Ecocriticism,” Peter Barry suggests an approach that foregrounds the natural as central, evaluating the “unsustainable uses of energy and resources” (254). In Ron Rash’s *Serena*, each of the human struggles has the natural world of the land at its heart, and in return the natural world of the Smoky Mountains is placed on equal footing with the human

characters, is in fact fused with the human. This paper argues that the natural world is merged with the human characters to demonstrate that when humans destroy the natural world they also destroy themselves. This merging is accomplished by a reverse-anthropomorphism, as explained by Park, uniting the character of Serena with predatory animals including an eagle and a panther, as well as by the union of the local logging crews with the land and trees they help to fell. Specifically, the logging crew is frequently killed by the trees themselves, often concurrent with the act of clear-cutting, so by destroying the trees the loggers are effectively destroying themselves. In *Serena*, Rash presents two possible futures for the natural world in the American South, two paths man may take in relation to the land: preservation or destruction. As economic gain motivates the destruction of the land, so economic disparity between social classes determines the agency to act for preservation instead of destruction. Ultimately, despite the potential human cost of foregrounding the natural world, the cost of neglecting to do so is significantly higher.

Hannah Ritorto is a first-year graduate student in the PhD Creative Writing Program at University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

- Sang-Keun Yoo

The Failures of Identity Performance and Rehumanization through Musical Narrative: Jane Jeong Trenka's Fugitive Visions

In the past, colonial imperialism dehumanized its colonized subjects by considering them mere flesh. The global system of neo-liberal capitalism still dehumanizes 21st century laborers by commoditizing their bodies, wombs, and even “vital energies” (Vora 3). The question is whether to regain humanity or redefine humanness: How can people reclaim agency? How can people raise their voices against dehumanizing power? Can dehumanized beings speak? In spite of its powerful rhetorical effect, blaming the violence on the word “dehumanization” has a certain risk in terms of silencing the victims even more: if the atrocities they experienced were truly dehumanizing, the victims, as non-human beings, would not be able to articulate their own experiences. There is a certain dilemma when a victim voices their experience of their dehumanized status with an agency. In its reading of a transnational adoptee’s memoir, therefore, this paper delves into the way in which a dehumanized subject tries to be rehumanized. As a person whose whole life began with unfathomable mystery and an acknowledgement of its commoditized status, Jane Jeong Trenka has spent her life in an ongoing effort at rehumanization. Trenka’s approach toward a dehumanizing social system shows how a person can create their own narrative while acknowledging their dehumanized status. Between the material body and the systematically given role, she achieves her unique identity by regarding her uncreated memory and bodily memory through a synesthetic musical narrative. In this analysis, a redefinition of conventional humanness is necessary.

Sang-Keun Yoo is a PhD Student in English at the University of California, Riverside. Yoo graduated with an MA in English Language and Literature from Seoul National University in 2014. Yoo is currently a Fulbright Fellow at the Institute of International Education. Research interests include American and Asian American literature, Identity politics, Trauma theory and memory studies, Postcolonialism, and Film.

- Thato Magano (TG)

Voicing Matty and escaping the spectacle of social absurdity: On Makhosazana Xaba, The Suit and The Stories It Inspired

Can Themba's short story, *The Suit*, set in tumultuous 1960s Apartheid Sophiatown and the Group Areas Act, explores infidelity and unforgiveness through the lives of Philemon and Matilda. *The Suit*, a valorised classic, has enjoyed a genealogy untypical of many short stories, its narrative closure ruptured by various authors in service of gendered preoccupations. Sphiwo Mahala intervenes with *The Suit Continued*, while Zukiswa Wanner complicates the narrative with *The Dress That Fed the Suit* and Makhosazana Xaba offers an alternative reality in *The Suit Continued: The Other Side*. While Mahala intervenes through the voice of Terrence, Matilda's extramarital partner and Wanner gives account of Matilda's last moments leading to her suicide, Xaba offers a narrative exploration of Matilda's internal life in ways that all three contributions before have not. In Themba and Mahala's versions, patriarchy and masculinity intersect to offer a limited view of women and their lived realities as the narratives center male protagonists while Wanner and Xaba disrupt these with narrative discontinuations that reflect the textured realities of the women in the story. Working with all four texts as sites of reference for voice and representation, I attempt to use Njabulo Ndebele proposition on the "spectacle of social absurdity" and locate Themba's original in this modality of Apartheid-era narrativising that accorded voice to the social absurd while sacrificing the interiorities of the characters, specifically in their representation of female characters. I meditate on Xaba's intervention as a narrative rupture that enables a destabilising of masculinities that rely on gendered nationalisms to facilitate a "ruination/disavowal of romantic nationalisms" where futurities of complex and nuanced female characters can be explored with greater investment in their interior lives.

Thato Magano is an MA African Literature Candidate at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), an active member of the student movement #FeesMustFall and cofounder of online platform, Vanguard Magazine and fiction writer. His academic interests range the scope of queer literatures, queer representations, gender and sexuality, African nationalisms, popular culture, race and post-colonial/ coloniality studies, affect and intersectional inquiries.

Reading the Region: Shelley Ingram, Chair

Room B; Friday, April 7; 3:30 pm

- Jeanna Mason

Place, Identity, and Community in Selected Works of Ernest J. Gaines

Ernest Gaines's ties to Louisiana and the influences of the people's ties to the land is a common thread which runs through most—if not all—of his works; however, this tie, or connection to the land, is not frequently examined or discussed by scholars. It is this connection to the land that I propose to explore in Gaines's novels *Catherine Carmier* and *Of Love and Dust*. My proposed thesis is that plantations—the settings for Gaines's novels *Catherine Carmier* and *Of Love and Dust*—are populated by people whose connection to the land shapes their identities, regardless of the amount of time these people spend on the plantation and of their relationship with the land itself.

Specifically, I will be taking an eco-critical approach to examining the relationships of the characters of Jackson and Brother from *Catherine Carmier* and James (Jim) Kelly, Sidney Bonbon, and Marcus Payne in *Of Love and Dust* to their plantation settings and to their different communities. These characters all have different relationships with the plantation and with the people who populate it, and I will argue that the differences in these relationships affect their

own self-determined identities. The way these characters interact with each other and with the communities of the plantations they inhabit places them in a unique position within their communities. Upon completion of this project, it should be clear that the plantation landscape and culture shapes the identity of the people who inhabit it from the black sharecropper to the Cajun overseer to the white landowner. These characters each possess ties to and dependence upon the land. Additionally, the characters' relationships with each other are influenced by these ties and interdependence. Finally, it is believed that the amount of time spent on the plantation is inconsequential in the plantation's influence upon the character's identity as can be illustrated by the characters of Marcus and James Kelley, who are temporary residents of the plantation, and by Jackson, who is a returning, albeit temporary, inhabitant.

Jeanna Mason is a PhD student at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette where she teaches first year writing and is a Graduate Assistant in the Ernest J. Gaines Center at UL. Her current research interests are Early American and African American literatures.

- Jessica Doble

Regionalism and Anthropology: Kate Chopin as Ethnographer

In 1883 and 1888, the Modern Language Association and the American Folklore Society were founded respectively. The formation of societies such as these demonstrates a move to professionalization and a solidification of scholarship in these fields as well as the beginning of the American academy as differentiated from the European academies, especially those of Great Britain and France. Part of this attempt to establish an American literary identity was the focus on regionalism and local color. Kate Chopin's writings feature black and Creole characters as well as Louisiana folklore such as balls and lullabies. While anthropologists such as Franz Boas were more concerned with the native population, they too featured customs and beliefs in their ethnographies. In believing that anthropology could be an objective scientific tool to study culture, anthropologists minimized their subjective role in the creation of their writing and believed ethnography to be an accurate, objective study of the culture, not a representation filtered through an outsider perspective. Chopin however, was doing similar ethnographic work by representing folklore in her writing, but in a more self-conscious thoughtful way. It is not until the 1980s that anthropologists acknowledge the less than scientific methodology of ethnographic research. As a contemporary reader and a folklorist, I argue that Chopin as a fiction writer often represented the "Other" culture better than an anthropologist. In stories such as "At the 'Cadian Ball," "Désirée's Baby," and "La Belle Zoraïde," Chopin utilizes her insider/outsider status in Louisiana to portray Louisiana culture in a nuanced way that allows for a dual consciousness in representation.

- Sally O. Donlon

Place, Politics, and Culture in Cajun Country

People all over the United States have retired to the Sunbelt for years and for several similar reasons: the climate, the pace, the cost of living. Usually, though, they come as outsiders and more less remain that way, ensconcing themselves in retirement villages or gated communities, content to soak up the sun and play golf for a few more months of the year than was possible from whence they came. Not so in Cajun Country, and more specifically that sliver of Louisiana geography that comprises Lafayette, Scott, Arnaudville, and Breaux Bridge. Here, people come expressly for the purpose of assimilating into the local culture to the greatest extent possible.

Many of the “nouveau Cajuns” leave high-level professions and progressive communities behind to build new lives in a politically conservative and education averse region, but still they come and still they stay. While enamored of the social culture they have adopted, they are often neither happy nor quiet about the political culture that now surrounds them.

This paper examines the stories of real folks who are struggling to reach reconciliation with the new old South. These newcomers retain connections with the larger nation through families and friends, and they travel frequently. Their experiences form important new pathways of communication through a population and a place that has gotten very good at exporting culture throughout the U.S. and the world, but has been largely isolated from external feedback for more than 250 years. *Place, Politics, and Culture in Cajun Country* is based on a combination of first-person narratives and critical analysis.

Sally O. Donlon was born and raised in downtown Lafayette, but she has lived many places and traveled extensively, and she enjoys wide-ranging interests. A non-traditional student, Sally is an administrator, researcher, writer, editor, and organizer. She is ABD in Cognitive Science (concentration: cognitive linguistics) and is currently working toward a PhD in English (concentration: creative writing/non-fiction).

Voices of the Global South: *Billie Tadros*, chair

Room C; Friday, April 7; 3:30 pm

- Disha Acharya

The Woman at the Threshold: The Fiction of Toru Dutt

This paper is part of a larger recovery project of Toru Dutt’s novels. It focuses on a revival of her works of fiction through the extension of Malashri Lal’s formulation of the *Law of the Threshold* and Homi Bhabha’s conception of liminality and hybridity. She is seen primarily as a poet and her novels have been excluded from the canon of Indian English fiction. I argue that her poetry represents stable identifiers for Indian nationalism and women’s identity whereas her novels do not have such identifiers. Instead, they present fractures and fissures of fragmented selves which did not correspond with the rhetoric of Indian nationalism or the idea of womanhood at the time. I extend the idea of the threshold by arguing that the threshold does allow for multiple existences for women as they inhabit the liminal space of not only gender but also race and national identity. The threshold becomes not just a doorway but a gateway to articulate identity by expressing this hybrid-liminal state in her novels. I see Toru Dutt’s novels as an example of the bridge that is a passage from the Home into the World but also which crosses into questions of gender, race, colonization, nationhood and self-hood. Toru Dutt proclaims in one of her letters that “novels are true and histories are false”; this replacing of history with fiction reflects her concerns with identity formation through fiction and not history. By blurring the lines between history and fiction, Toru Dutt questions identity politics and draws attention to the patriarchal notions of transgression and crossing of boundaries for women. 266 words

Disha Acharya is a PhD candidate at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Her dissertation is a recovery project of Toru Dutt, Olive Schreiner and Sara Jeanette Duncan’s works of fiction. She completed her Bachelor’s, Master’s and M.Phil from India where she also taught for five years before embarking on her PhD in the U.S.

- Merry Lynn Byrd

the DEEPENING South: Contemporary Gulf South Women's Memoir

Autobiography can unite theory and praxis—particularly after disasters. Overviewing Gulf-South post-Katrina memoir and tying together life-writing and trauma studies, this paper first deconstructs official and officials' accounts of the storm and aftermath using the work of activist/writers Mayaba Liebenthal and Alissa Bierra and uses the lens of literary theory to question the entire enterprise/endeavor of dealing with disaster in an age of extreme events. The paper then looks at three Katrina memoirs, one by New Orleans native, Phyllis Montana LeBlanc, the second by relief organizer Cholene Espinoza, and the third by Egyptian Jewish exile/New Orleans transplant, Joyce Zonana, and finds within them a successful merging of personal history and psychology with public trauma and a blending of theory and praxis that offers compassion and empathy and foregrounds unitive action and restorative justice. These writers neither merely report events nor present themselves as models of emulation; rather they describe and attempt what Leela Fernandes calls “living divinity” in a world both mundane and broken.

Merry L. Byrd is an Associate Professor of English at Virginia State University. She previously taught at Southern University in New Orleans. Her fields of specialization are women's memoir and environmental humanities. She is founder and editor of NOLA DIASPORA, www.noladiaspora.org, and is currently completing a monograph, *Sustainable Selves: Women's Memoir of the Twentieth Century*.

- Khirsten Doolan (TG)

Queer Faces in Rural Places: The Movement of Queer Women Literature

This paper focuses on the way queer women are portrayed in rural spaces in queer American literature. By studying several representations of queer women in spaces thought to be limited and averse to historically marginalized groups, I aim to illustrate the importance of these representations and the evolution of literature's queer women in rural spaces alongside the LGBTQ social movements. For the purpose of this paper, I will be looking at *Her Name in the Sky* by Kelly Quindlen (2014), *The Miseducation of Cameron Post* by Emily M. Danforth (2012), and *Rosemary and Juliet* by Judy MacLean (2004). Through the situations the women find themselves mired in throughout these novels, the movement of the LGBTQ community is marked but these representations also demonstrate how much the queer women in underserved rural places are left further behind as the LGBTQ movement edges forward. By comparing them to Rita Mae Brown's 1973 *Rubyfruit Jungle* in combination with steps forward in equal rights and literary depictions of queer women in cities, I will illustrate the importance of looking in depth at these queer faces in rural places and what those depictions represent for rural LGBTQ communities. I will also be taking modern day laws and restrictions protecting and discriminating against LGBTQ individuals in rural areas as well as in the United States to demonstrate what is shown in the literature I interact with. By opening a dialogue between social justice movements and literature, we can continue to move forward without leaving behind the queer faces in rural places.

Khirsten Doolan is a graduate student on the thesis track in English with a concentration in literature set for graduation from Northwestern State University in spring 2017, and she is

planning to continue on to her PhD in women and gender studies.

- Gnei Soraya Zarook (TG)
The Global South Speaks Back: Queering Love and Remittances in Shailja Patel's Migritude

In this paper, I place two poems from Shailja Patel's *Migritude* in conversation with each other. In "Shilling Love Part I," I analyze explicit expressions of love as being substituted by the shilling. Furthermore, I illustrate how such a queering of love is necessitated by the struggle for upward mobility that requires a south-to-north migration that separates families. As such, I locate this queering as representing a continuation of Empire. In "Shilling Love Part II," I locate a second substitution: that of the literary for the shilling. I connect the shilling to the notion of remittances, which traditionally take the form of money. I posit that Patel, who returns home with *Migritude*, undertakes a voluntary substitution of remittances that grants her an alternate space through which to contest the operations of the global North which required the first queering originally. Current scholarship on Shailja Patel's *Migritude* explores notions of art as activism, racialized and sexualized diasporic subjects, and the promises of a migrant attitude. My research contributes to this conversation regarding alterities by charting a movement from migrant struggle to migrant attitude, and by calling attention to the need for alternative ways to read intimacies within the specific contexts of colonization, migration, and globalization. My analysis is critical in that it reveals *Migritude* as being both Patel's remittance to her community, and also a call to arms to individuals from oppressed populations in the global South who seek new ways to speak back to the forces of Empire that bade them silence their love and their anger.

Gnei Soraya Zarook is an international student from Sri Lanka. She is a graduate of California State University Channel Islands' English program. She is currently an English Ph.D. student at University of California, Riverside. Her areas of study include South Asian Anglophone / South East Asian Anglophone literature, with a focus on Sri Lankan Anglophone literature, and intersections into trauma theory, feminist studies, and biopolitics.

**Traumatic Memory and Truth in Narrative Nonfiction: Diana Emmons, Chair
Room A; Saturday, April 8; 9:00 am**

In Vivian Gornick's *The Situation and the Story: The Art of Personal Narrative*, she states quite clearly, "It is all about the Art, you get no credit for the living."

Yet many still view the contemporary Nonfiction narrative as a diary entry or a simple retelling of an extraordinary moment in time. However, with careful examination, it is clear that there is a form and function to the Art of Nonfiction that goes beyond a basic reportage of the facts of a singular or traumatic event. The ultimate goal of these works is to achieve for the reader an experiential form of truth behind the basic facts of the author's narrative. This is especially relevant when dealing with the recounting of traumatic events, when the lines of factual memory themselves begin to blur. This panel will present four different examples of examining the nature of experiential truth in Nonfiction and the various perspectives that go into the shaping and the presenting of a traumatic narrative.

- Rebecca Hazelwood
Humanizing Abusers: The Difference Between Reality and Art

Creative nonfiction is an odd genre because it is defined not by its form (as in poetry or drama) but by what it isn't: fiction. It isn't made up. Creative nonfiction purports to be true. Therein lies the problem, for when we are talking about truth and relying on memory, when we are writing

about subjects other than ourselves, and when we are writing “creatively,” we have several overlapping problems. We have to make ethical choices while trying to write art.

Recently, I was talking to a friend who writes about her own domestic abuse in her creative nonfiction; she told me she was sometimes frustrated that people praised her for humanizing her abuser. I understand that frustration. Abusers are so often let off the hook for what they are done, or excused, or empathized with, while those who they have abused are left to defend themselves. We see that in court cases and in media and in comment sections. This is a struggle for me, too, as a woman who is frequently challenged for writing about her less-than-perfect family members. I am constantly rethinking both the ethics of writing about others and the task of bringing them alive on the page.

For my panel, “Traumatic Memory and Truth in Narrative Nonfiction,” I plan to explore the term “creative nonfiction” and the two worlds it sets up, those of art (“creative”) and truth (“nonfiction”) and how they intersect, especially in traumatic writing. I plan to discuss how creative nonfiction writers have a responsibility to not just the truth but also their art. They must humanize their abusers and create round characters, because that is what great writing asks us to do—even if reality differs somewhat. This is what “creative” nonfiction is.

- Cate Root

- Trauma and Truth in the work of Dorothy Allison*

Dorothy Allison’s work anchors both fiction and nonfiction in the same world, and it is a violent, traumatic world. She borrows people and stories from her life, and that fact tends to inflict in some readers a curiosity, a burning need to know what *actually* happened. Her work is concerned not only with the violations of abuse, but with how such violations are eventually disclosed or not disclosed. Allison uses multiple narratives to offer different shades of “truth.” Allison has two goals: to create the truest experience for her reader and to address the sheer impossibility of communicating *the one truth* through story. While Allison’s fiction swarms the reader with feelings and sensations of experience, her nonfiction points out her own inconsistencies, tendencies to hide, and temptations to lie. By embracing some and hinting at other similarities between historical fact and fiction, Allison frustrates the reader’s quest for “one truth” and asserts total narrative control. Allison plays with truth to force the reader to confront the variability and complexity of truth—in many ways, the impossibility of truth.

- Gina Warren

- Deep Pools: When Reading Trauma is Like Holding Your Breath and Why It Works*

While some memoirs read like driving down linear, straightforward roads, other memoirs read like swimming through deep pools. In memoirs that deal with trauma, writers often balance skimming the surface of the forward story with diving down into depths of the past. The reader’s experience of accessing this depth charge, splitting from the present, and holding their breath is an important aspect of *Three Dog Night*, by Abigail Thomas, *The Year of Magical Thinking*, by Joan Didion, and *Wild*, by Cheryl Strayed. While these memoirs are different in content and certain aspects of style, they all deal with departures from the present, and some kind of trauma—whether it’s extreme grief, loss, or devastation. In any text, staying underwater and moving away from the surface of the forward story for too long can be detrimental, but an apt switching between nonlinear time periods and a clear linear trajectory can mirror the phenomenological experience of trauma. By forcing the reader to hold their breath during the narrative, Thomas, Didion, and Strayed effectively articulate the trauma of pain and loss on the

page.

- Josie Scanlon

Broken Mirrors: Disjointed Narratives and Traumatic Memory

Roberta Culbertson links trauma and the narrative urge. She writes that to survive violation is precisely this: “to live with the paradox of silence and the present but unreachable force of memory,” to live with the “need to tell what seems untellable.” The paradox is more than just telling things people don’t want to hear, or might not believe. “It is the paradox of a known and felt truth that unfortunately obeys the logic of dreams rather than of speech and so seems as unreachable, as other, as these, and as difficult to communicate and interpret.” How then, do writers go about depicting trauma in a meaningful way?

One of the ways nonfiction writers shape suffering into art is by employing literary devices to replicate the brain’s response to trauma in text: by using insistent and repetitive images, by disrupting chronology, by presenting the narrative in a fractured and incomplete way. A close examination of texts by Joan Didion, Jamaica Kincaid, and Maggie Nelson, will provide a deeper understanding of how creative nonfiction writers are attempting to express the inexpressible and in doing so, transcending personal trauma into universal and important testimony.

**Writing the South: Craft, Pedagogy, & Beyond: *Dustin Hyman, Chair*
Room B; Saturday, April 8; 9:00 am**

Are writers considered ‘southern’ based on their geographical background, or is it the content of their work? In addition to speaking about craft and pedagogy, this panel of writers will share opinions concerning southern authenticity and appropriation. How might we as writers trouble the dividing line between southern and non-southern? Do writers of the south have an obligation to address marginalized groups and environmental threats? Should teachers of creative writing encourage their students to write about specific socio-economic issues linked to the Southern United States? How does reading the south influence the writing of it, and how might a poet interrogate these topics in ways that are different or similar to a fiction writer? Prior to sharing their poetry and fiction, each presenter (two native southerners, two transplants) will address these questions and go on to discuss their approaches, interests and thoughts pertaining to *Writing the South*. Topics and themes to be interrogated will include (but not be limited to) the following: southern appropriation, the rural south, southern migrations, consumerism, ecology and climate change, religion, and the notion of multiple souths. After relating such topics to craft and pedagogy, each presenter will exhibit their ideas by sharing excerpts of creative work.

- J Bruce Fuller

The Eco-gothic in Southern Poetry

My new work is focused on blending environmental poetry and the Southern gothic. Louisiana is losing land to climate change at an alarming rate, and I and others have been affected by events such as recent flooding, oil spills, sinkholes, and Hurricane Katrina. After going through Katrina, I began exploring in my poetry the ways that our environment affects our everyday lives. Specifically, I am interested in the ways environment and climate change cause us to behave the way we do. I call this idea Eco-gothic, the idea that as our environment decays people behave in an ever-increasing pattern of denial and destruction. This can be seen in my native Louisiana, where though we are the first Americans dealing with the effects of climate change, we are also

some of the least likely to believe it is happening. In fact, we are hastening its effects. I will read selections from my current writing project, a book length poem entitled *On a Horse Named Tomorrow*, as well as from my newest publication *The Dissenter's Ground*, both of which deal with these ideas.

J. Bruce Fuller is a Louisiana native, and is a Wallace Stegner Fellow in Poetry at Stanford University. His chapbooks include *The Dissenter's Ground* (Hyacinth Girl Press 2016), and *Flood*, winner of the 2013 Swan Scythe Chapbook Contest. He is co-editor of *Vision/Verse 2009-2013: An Anthology of Poetry*. He received a MFA from McNeese and a Ph.D. from UL-Lafayette.

- Leigh Camacho Rourks

- Shallowing: Regionalism, Exploitation, and the Southern Wild*

Southern identity is often a struggle between celebrating and cultivating an outsider status and rebelling against the label of other. This conflict is exemplified in the love/hate relationship southerners have for the portrayal of their region on screen, as seen in movies and television shows like *Water Boy*, *Duck Dynasty*, and *True Blood*. Like many Southern fiction writers before me, I work to find the line between writing my region and exploitive regionalism. This is especially true in my stories which highlight life for those on the fringe, especially those who live along rural bayous and swamps. I will share an excerpt from one such story, “Shallowing,” and discuss the ways contemporary writers attempt to subvert southern stereotypes while continuing to write inside the tradition of Southern Literature, especially Southern Gothic (and whether we are successful in this attempt). I will explore the connections between Southern ties to the land (especially the exotified swamp) and national ideas of the South as being uncivilized, uncultured, uneducated, and dangerous—or wild.

Leigh Camacho Rourks is both a Louisiana native and transplant, having grown up in South Florida. She is a Fellow at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette and teaches American Literature and Creative Writing. She is the recipient of the Glenna Luschei Prairie Schooner Award and the Robert Watson Literary Review Prize in Fiction and has been a finalist for several other awards. Her prose has appeared in a number of journals, including *Kenyon Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *December Magazine*, *TriQuarterly*, and *Greensboro Review*.

- Ephraim Sommers

- Florida Man Imagines Himself a Hurricane and Falls in Love*

My new creative work is concerned with subverting Southern archetypes in contemporary American poetry. A common joke among native Floridians concerns newspaper headlines which often portray a “Florida Man” doing something outlandish and stupid. Examples: “Florida Man Fights Off Seven Cops while Masturbating” or “Florida Man Reappears After Thirty Years Lost in Swamp, Says He Was Trying to Learn the Alligator’s Language.” Inherent in most if not all of these “true” stories is the archetype of the poor, uneducated, violent, alcoholic, white Southerner. As a Florida transplant, I’m interested, specifically, in how I might trouble the common definition of the typical white Southerner by inhabiting the voice of the “Florida Man” and subverting it. What happens when we let the Florida Man speak, and he’s educated, and he thinks and feels deeply, and he becomes capable of regret and guilt? I will read selections from my current writing project, a book of poems titled *Slutty Little Song Machine* which deals with

collisions: both of the past and the present, and of the social and the personal.

Ephraim Scott Sommers is a Florida transplant and teaches full-time on the creative writing graduate faculty at the University of Central Florida. His first book of poems, *The Night We Set the Dead Kid on Fire*, won the 2016 Patricia Bibby First Book Prize and will be out in Spring of 2017 from Tebot Bach Press. He received an MFA from San Diego State University and a Ph.D. from Western Michigan University. Recent poems and criticism have appeared or are forthcoming in *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Cream City Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Tri Quarterly*, *Verse Daily*, and elsewhere.

- Dustin Hyman

We Need Protest Fiction Down Here?

I'm curious to know how other writers of the south navigate the borders between authenticity and appropriation. What themes found in southern writing should be heavily scrutinized when told by an 'outsider', and what things might be elucidated by a non-native perspective? "Church of Pit" is a short story set in Louisiana. Prior to reading an excerpt, I will discuss some of the tropes this narrative explores and why they function best in a southern locale. This talk / paper will argue that traditional themes found in southern literature must evolve in order to examine new social-justice issues plaguing Louisiana and other Southern States. The introduction to my creative work will include a brief discussion about craft and pedagogy, and I will encourage teachers and writers alike to address social / environmental issues affecting (but not limited to) life in the Southern United States. This presentation will address problems that require political action specific to the south—these socioeconomic and environmental concerns are urgent and too often overlooked in academia. I have found humor to be an affective counterbalance to serious indictments of institutions that influence the Southern U.S. Specific social issues confronted in my recent creative work include satirical explorations of consumerism, religion and climate change.

Dustin Hyman has tried freelance writing and journalism, but neither occupation gave him sufficient creative control. He teaches at the University of Louisiana, where he is working toward a PhD in English. His fiction has appeared in strange places and his first novel, *Island Folks*, was published in 2014 by Black Rose Writing.

Local Fieldwork with Global Implications: The Archive of Cajun and Creole Folklore of the Center for Louisiana Studies (Roundtable): *John Sharp, Moderator*

Room C; Saturday, April 8; 9:00 am

- Chris Segura, Archivist, Center for Louisiana Studies
- Barry Ancelet, Emeritus Professor of Modern Languages, University of Louisiana, Lafayette
- John Sharp, Assistant Director for Research, Center for Louisiana Studies

Critical Plenary, *Jo Davis-McElligatt, Moderator*

Room C; Saturday, April 8; 10:45 am

- Rebecca Snedeker, Tulane University

Mapping the Global Gulf Coast

- Anthony Wilson, LaGrange College
"People of the Land": Framing the Hillbillies, Beasts, and Strangers of the Contemporary South
- Brooke White, University of Mississippi
Politics of Water in the New South Project

**Blood and Fury: Narratives of Conflict in Southern Literature: Mary Ann Wilson, Chair
Room B; Saturday, April 8; 1:45 pm**

- Matthew Pincus
*"Sootysouled Rascal": Judge Holden's Rendition of America's Violent Democracy in
McCarthy's Blood Meridian*

Blood Meridian's Judge Holden, is one of the memorable villains in contemporary American fiction. McCarthy seeks to deconstruct American imperialism, justified by its democratic principles by rupturing the concept of Manifest Destiny, or America's divine right to conquer and settle the West by any means necessary. *Blood Meridian* shows this by placing Judge Holden, a man who embodies the law of the American state apparatus, within the scenic beauty of the American Southwest, a smooth space where he inflicts violence, literally captures human body parts for economic gain, and in the end rapes and murders the Kid, who went out West as an experiment to see, "whether his own heart is [was] not another kind clay." The concepts of smooth space and the state apparatus are taken from *A Thousand Plateaus*, a seminal post-structuralist text by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, and act as a lens from which to examine Holden's role. McCarthy's lyrical style allows time and place in the desert of the American Southwest to become malleable. It is in this prehensile landscape that the Judge develops a concept of state policing where massacre of Indians and Mexicans is justified by Manifest Destiny. By examining these issues, *Blood Meridian* works to re-center and revise cultural conceptions of power, and to broaden one's understanding of a Deep South to the American Southwest just as McCarthy's career has moved from Appalachia Tennessee to travails between the present-day lands of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and Southern California.

Matthew Pincus holds an M.F.A. in Writing & Poetics from Naropa University. He is a regular reviewer for *Bookslut*, *Rain Taxi*, *Pank*, and his article on Dodie Bellamy was featured in *Coldfront*. Currently, he is a PhD Fellow at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette specializing in American literature and literary studies. His research focuses are American gothic, noir, and Southern/border literature.

- Daniel J. Pizappi (TG)
"They endured": Pantemporal Space in The Sound and the Fury

In this paper, I examine the relationship of Faulkner's characters within *The Sound and the Fury* to the hauntological, pantemporal experience of modernity. By this I mean that their subjective experience in the modern "now" is inevitably accountable to the past and yet simultaneously driven toward the future. Faulkner's characters experience these conflicting pulls spatially. I focus primarily on the on the novel's appendix, and particularly its portrayal of Dilsey and Caddy. If we situate Jefferson and the Compson home is the metaphorical location of the past

and any movement away from Jefferson as a symbolic venture into futurity, then the temporal affect of these characters can be expressed geographically. Thus Dilsey's refusal to see the photo of Caddy Caddy and have her brought back to Jefferson is indicative of her own experience of the pantemporal present as suffused with the past, yet moving toward the future. Comparing the post-novel movements of Dilsey and Caddy reveals that Caddy has allowed herself to be transnationally swept away from Jefferson and thus away from the metaphoric past. Unlike Caddy, Dilsey's movement away from Jefferson, but only so far away as Memphis, suggests that she does not allow herself to get so far from Jefferson that she fades completely into the symbolic. Drawing on recent work in psychology and the social sciences that suggests the pantemporal *presence* of the past is fundamental to all subjective experience in our technologically mediated present, I argue that the apparently backward looking tendencies of the South and southern literature can no longer be viewed as simply pre-modern exceptionalism. Rather this suggests that what Allen Tate called the "backward glance" of the Southern renaissance appears almost prescient of the fundamental subjective experience of technologically driven modernity.

Daniel Pizappi is a doctoral student and teaching associate at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. He has previously written and published essays on subjects including Ernest Hemingway, Elizabeth Madox Roberts, poet Skipwith Cannell, and labor songs. His primary research interests include American modernism, 20th century and contemporary Southern lit, affect and intergenerational trauma.

- Leigh Camacho Rourks
Character, Violence, and Place: How Tom Franklin Encourages Us to Love the Characters We'd Prefer to Hate

Tom Franklin's mythic descriptions of the South evoke an aggressive, harsh, and unforgiving landscape that is defined by its nearly untamable and incredibly dangerous flora and fauna, not to mention its violent history. Through these descriptions, Franklin takes advantage of what we all know instinctively: *where* a person is helps to create *who* he is. Literary theorists such as Gaston Bachelard have long stressed the importance of this "link between place and identity formation" (DeLange et al. 16). In this presentation, I will argue that the violent home that Franklin builds for his characters doesn't just reflect their violence, but explains it, making the violence itself seem more reasonable to readers. I will explore the ways Franklin crafts a world in which place and person are fully intertwined, and how his characters are animated by the violence of their home, so that this violence is read as a natural part of them. I will ask how Franklin slowly bonds readers to the hard men and women in his novels *Crooked Letter*, *Crooked Letter* and *Smonk*, and his short story collection *Poachers*, forcing us to feel the full force of the context in which they act, and to see them as more than just the violence in which they engage.

Leigh Camacho Rourks is a Fellow at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette and teaches American Literature and Creative Writing. She is the recipient of the Glenna Luschei Prairie Schooner Award and the Robert Watson Literary Review Prize in Fiction and has been a finalist for several other awards. Her prose has appeared in a number of journals, including *Kenyon Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *December Magazine*, *TriQuarterly*, and *Greensboro Review*.

- Allison Rittmayer

Visions of Virginia: 1831, 1958-1967, 2016

This presentation will examine the way the South is recreated in three films from 2016: *The Birth of a Nation* (dir. Nate Parker), *Hidden Figures* (dir. Theodore Melfi), and *Loving* (dir. Jeff Nichols). Each of these films presents the struggle for human dignity, though in different times and different arenas. However, something about each historical event begged retelling now. The political and social atmosphere of the 2010s has led to the folding of history, taking us, in 2016, back to 1831 and 1958-1967 Virginia. For Deleuze, the fold is always a struggle, a moment of crisis, and I will explore how the crises within these three films resonate with each other, and with our lives in 2016. The other struggle, or fold, that I will examine is the conflict between the expectations placed upon these films and their respective receptions. Not all of these films have been as effective at tapping into the zeitgeist as they had intended. Some of the questions this presentation will address include: Why was *The Birth of a Nation* initially praised at Sundance, but then given lukewarm reviews? Why did Nate Parker's 2001 acquittal for sexual assault become a public controversy only with his directorial debut, as opposed to earlier in his acting career? Why is *Loving* getting the most critical buzz? And why did they make *Hidden Figures* into a rated-PG dramedy? Most importantly, I will show how all of these films present us with a vision of the South as a concept that is constantly folding in on itself—intriguing and forgotten, historical truth and visual fabrication, beauty and decay, local and global, past and present.

Allison Rittmayer is an assistant professor of English and Film Studies at Northwestern State University. Her primary area of research is world cinema, with specializations in French, Francophone, and Latin American film. Her current book project theorizes the ethics and politics of representing torture and state violence in historical fiction films. Dr. Rittmayer has chapters forthcoming in two edited collections, and she is currently book review editor for the journal *Southern Studies*. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Florida.

**Reporting Back: The Global South and its Relations: Jonathan Goodwin, Chair
Room C; Saturday, April 8; 1:45 pm**

- Catherine Ciavarella (via SKYPE)

Ebola: The Global North's VICE

In “third world” spaces that are often seen by the West as lacking adequate sociopolitical infrastructures and healthcare policies, whenever an epidemic arises, a concurrent western media firestorm awakens; one which filters into and feeds off of a primal, nationalistic defensive fear of contamination. My paper will place the events of the 2014 West African Ebola Outbreak in direct conversation with postcolonial theory, to illuminate myriad ethical issues in global health rhetoric, and the generally exploitative journalistic practices utilized by platforms of “first world” media coverage. Using *VICE News's* docuseries on the Outbreak as a case study, I will analyze how the media oversimplified and consolidated the experiences of sufferers, and shaped them in relation to pre-existing colonial principles of primitivism and the colonial *grotesque*. I will argue that through fear-mongering language, xenophobic sentiments, and sociocultural narrative biases, that western news outlets like *VICE* further essentialize and orientalize disease, and deepen the ideological rift between “us and them,” “diseased and healthy.” As a result of these complex processes, it becomes simpler for the Body Politic of the global north to relegate foreign-sounding diseases to the mysterious, dangerous, and *enigmatic* space of the global south. Thus western media and humanitarian aid in these outbreaks mirror a residual colonizing

influence, in that they work to police, correct, and reinforce a healthcare system, and by extension a governmental/political structure, that reflects their own. My paper will ultimately call for a more ethical approach to awareness and aid for spaces like West Africa, by critiquing the global north's construct of "global health," and isolating the scientific processes and terminologies of disease from its ideological tethers, in order to humanize the suffering subject and to *universalize* a language of compassion.

Catherine Ciavarella is a first-year English Graduate student at California State University, Fullerton. She is interested in the ethics of narrative, as well as the literal and metaphorical portrayals of Pathology and Psychology in Literature. She is currently researching the biopolitical histories and implications of psychiatric and general public healthcare infrastructures, and hopes to uncover minor histories of suffering.

- Jarvis McInnis

A Corporate Plantation Reading Public: Labor, Literacy, and Diaspora in Hemispheric South

This paper reconstructs the history of the Cotton Farmer, a newspaper edited and published by the black tenant farmers of the Delta & Pine Land Company (DPL). Touted as the world's largest cotton plantation, DPL was a constellation of eighteen plantations located in the "rich alluvial lands" of the Mississippi Delta. Staffed by "a committee of reporters on each plantation," who kept in touch with the editor, Rev. Addison Wimbs, also a black tenant farmer, the Cotton Farmer was distributed every Saturday and had "a paid circulation of over 1300 copies a year." The paper ran from 1919 to circa 1927 and was mainly confined to DPL's properties. Given its limited circulation and brief existence, very little is known about the Cotton Farmer. Any copies that would have survived were likely lost to the angry waters of the muddy Mississippi River, when, in 1927, the region experienced the worst river flood in the history of the United States, leaving DPL's plantations under three to fifteen feet of water from March to July.

In January 1927, just two months before the historic flood, Wimbs received correspondence from John J. Smith, a reader in Shepard Island, Bocas del Toro, Panama, noting that he had received three copies of the paper and requesting a subscription. Surprised that it had traveled such a vast distance, Wimbs speculated that it "had reached Panama . . . on account of its [sympathetic] attitude towards Marcus Garvey." Indeed, Smith was a devoted Garveyite who likely received the Cotton Farmer through the same labor networks that circulated the Negro World, the organ of Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). He was also a West Indian migrant laborer who worked on the region's vast banana and fruit plantations owned and operated by the infamous United Fruit Company (UFCO). In fact, Bocas del Toro was Panama's largest-banana producing region, and as such, mirrored the Mississippi Delta as a public organized around the corporate plantation.

Through the Cotton Farmer and its international circulation, this paper explores the intersections of labor, literacy, and diaspora in the hemispheric South. What do we make of this black reading public among tenant farmers on a corporate cotton plantation in the Mississippi Delta at the height of Jim Crow? How does the convergence of labor and literacy at once challenge and correspond with traditional accounts of sharecropping in the Jim Crow South? What kinds of literacies did black tenants cultivate on the corporate plantation? Furthermore, in light of the Cotton Farmer's circulation from the Mississippi Delta's cotton fields to Panama's banana fields, how might we think about the corporate plantation as a mode of labor organization

that not only connects the antebellum plantation to the factory, but also links the US South to the larger project of colonial domination in the Caribbean, Latin America, and the broader global South? Most studies of DPL and UFCO view them in isolation. However, the Cotton Farmer provides a unique opportunity to situate the corporate plantation in a comparative, hemispheric context and examine it as a more widespread phenomenon in the afterlife of slavery.

Jarvis C. McInnis is an assistant professor at the University of Notre Dame, where he teaches and studies African American & African Diaspora literature and culture. His first book project, “The Afterlives of the Plantation: Aesthetics, Labor, and Diaspora in the Global Black South,” aims to reorient the geographic contours of black transnationalism and diaspora by exploring the hemispheric linkages between Southern African American and Caribbean literature and culture in the early twentieth century.

- Chet Breaux

The Sinking South: Drones, Coastal Ecology, and Climate Change

In 2016, the United States quietly witnessed our first relocation of climate change refugees. On the coast of South Louisiana, Ilse de Jean Charles is gradually submerging as global sea levels continue to rise. The story was trending on social media for several days, but public interest has since dissipated. Scholars working across disciplines in rhetoric, writing, and new media studies have written about climate change, its impacts on ecology, and the rhetoric of environmentalism (Dobrin, Palmter and Killingsworth, Herndl). This scholarship does not address the contemporary realities of climate change. The rhetoric of global warming, in particular, focused the popular discussion on apocalyptic imagery of a destroyed ozone layer. The new reality of climate change, however, is silent. Peacemeal news coverage of communities forced to relocate and abandon traditional land fades quickly in the 24 hour news cycle, and scholarship has not adapted to the contemporary effects of climate change, which disproportionately affect the poor and people of color. Wealthy citizens and areas will survive the first waves of major sea-level rise, but disadvantaged communities will not. Now is the time to begin discussing strategies to document, preserve, and combat climate change. Several consumer technologies, like drones, have now become affordable and capable platforms that are useful for communities experiencing the effects of climate change. Drones, in particular, are powerful tools for participatory mapmaking through the use of aerial photography. Drones can quickly and accurately film coastal areas and produce maps that document the ongoing ecological impact of sea level rise. In this presentation, I outline methods of equipping communities with the capability of monitoring areas susceptible to the impacts of climate change using consumer drone technology. I present data and specifications on popular consumer grade drones, as well as imagery collected using drones along Louisiana’s coastline. Maps and aerial photography produced with drones has been successfully used in courts to protect community resources and preserve cultural memory. Climate change is already affecting the South, and now is the time for researchers across disciplines to begin discussing methods for confronting the cultural impacts of sea level rise. For many groups, there is no looming apocalypse, only a rising sea and limited options.

Chet Breaux is the Director of the Digital Writing Studio at Florida International University. He

researches rhetoric and new media, and is currently studying intersections between climate change and media production.

- Diana Emmons
The Mirror Cracked: Examination of the Horror Film Industry and its Reflections on American Society

If you wanted to do a sociological examination of a particular era in history, your first instinct would probably not be to grab a popular horror film. However, you might be doing yourself a disservice. The Horror genre, while not necessarily the most esthetically pleasing of the film genres to some, is in many ways the most revealing. Under great duress, a person can be pushed to immense feats of will, be they terrible or heroic. Take that same mirror and reflect an entire societies greatest fears, you will see with greater clarity what drives that society and shapes it. The American horror cinema industry brings in well over 500 million a year in ticket sales with a higher profit margin than any other genre coming out of Hollywood. This is not including the huge upswing in popularity of horror based television shows, such as American Horror Story and The Walking Dead. But despite its popularity, or perhaps because of it, Horror has never been considered High Art and is usually dismissed by the critics. This lack of scrutiny or expectations can be seen as a positive. It allows for far more flexibility and honesty in the topics it examines without the confines of the expectations of High Art. The mirror to what society does not want to see is held up with a brutal sense of honesty.

My paper will examine this relationship of Horror cinema and the American societal fears it reflects over the past century. I will examine the idea that the American Horror Film has done a far more astute examination of the fears and motivations of the United States, decade by decade, than most other genres. We live in a culture of fear and it is by examining that fear that we can come to understand it.