

ABSTRACTS

Masculinity and Nation in the Popular Fiction of the Spanish-American War: Kirk Munroe's *Forward, March!* (1899)
Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet

In an article on early American citizenship, historian Linda Kerber points out the long-standing European tradition of linking citizenship to military service and quotes a curious toast proposed by one of the Founding Fathers' wives in 1783: "May all our citizens be soldiers, and all our soldiers citizens." While the immediate reference would be to the institution of a civil militia as opposed to a standing army, the conflation of citizenship with soldiering throws light on the contradictory and problematic relationship of women to national identity in an era of nation-founding and nation-building. As a number of American historians have shown (Kaplan, McClintock, Romero), this relationship continued to be fractured by contradiction and incoherence throughout the nineteenth century. The essay focuses on American nationalism at the turn of the twentieth century, as it converged with issues of masculine definition and the emergent heterosexual/homosexual axis, the women's movement, the closing of the Western frontier, and a surge of racist and militarist enthusiasm which led to the Spanish-American War of 1898. Munroe's novel offers a useful portrait of the dynamics linking patriotism (critically related to nationalism), gender definition, and military service in this unfinished history of American imperialism. (ASM)

Communities in Anonymity: The Remarkable Confidence of Modern Nations
Ágnes Györke

The essay explores the concept of modernity vis-a-vis the discourse of nationalism studies, primarily Benedict Anderson's ground-breaking *Imagined Communities*. It discusses the various meanings implied by "modernity" and "modernism," and investigates Walter Benjamin's impact on the historical discourse of the modern nation, claiming that though he has been a significant inspiration for historians and social scientists, his terms are often misread. Benjamin's comments on Paul Klee's *Angelus Novus*, for instance, which depicts a creature of ambiguous

gender, are transformed into an affirmative vision of progress in Anderson's text. One of the reasons, the essay contends, why the historical discourse of nationalism studies is unable to do justice to Benjamin's terms lies in the fact that modernist historians do not take the conceptual difference between modernity and modernism into account. This very same lack of differentiation explains why Anderson endows novels produced between the eighteenth century and World War II with the capacity to evoke a ubiquitous sense of communal feeling. (ÁGY)

Describing Ourselves: Identity Overlap and Fault Lines Regarding How Southerners Would Describe the South to Non-Southerners
Scott H. Huffmon, Christopher N. Lawrence, and Allie Briggs

Southern identity has been a topic of confusion, legend, or derision since shortly after the establishment of the original American colonies. Originally, the culture and identity of the South were defined not by southerners themselves, but by the people of the region we now describe as the "Northeast" (Cobb 2005). As history progressed, the views of the South by outsiders would range from the romantic to the gothic to the horrified. During the Civil Rights Era, southerners became especially sensitive to the perceptions of their region by outsiders. As recent research by Cooper and Knotts demonstrates perceptions of the South among non-southerners, however, has improved, and southerners often view themselves from the standpoint of conflicting identities. Miller's findings prove that this phenomenon is especially prevalent when examining differences between blacks and whites in the South. Using a unique data set generated from a survey of one Deep South state, South Carolina, the essay explores how those living in the South would describe the South to someone who had never visited. In so doing, this research illuminates some of the overlap and schisms among groups residing in the South regarding how they view their region. (SHH, CNL, AB)

Postmodern Representation and Commodity Spectacle in Nathanael West's *The Day of the Locust*
Daniel Darvay

The essay argues that in *The Day of the Locust* (1939) Nathanael West depicts the strange coexistence of dire poverty and a culture of abundance during the Great Depression by using an aesthetic technique that anticipates the characteristic features of the postmodern novel. The analysis shows that West's experimentation with postmodern aesthetic forms includes a reconfiguration of the relationship between history and fiction so that the two seemingly opposite modes of expression are no longer perceived as mutually exclusive alternatives but designate instead mere possibilities within an infinite number of parallel universes. As the very possibility of genuine historical knowledge is complicated and questioned in the novel, West's characters find themselves to be actors in several worlds at once, none of which is capable of offering a unifying perspective or a stable form of identity. Their world is dehumanized and devoid of gratification, especially as they constantly find themselves caught up in self-sufficient representations of their own making. Enthralled and ultimately devastated by commodification, West's characters repeatedly invoke mass produced images and events as objects of consumption that can never quite fulfill their desires, and, therefore, they are not so much victims as active agents of their own gullibility. (DD)

To Whose Self Be True? Students Look at *The Turn of the Screw* and Its Film Adaptations
Ákos Farkas

Following an introductory survey of the relevant literature, the essay examines how a group of MA students tackle the issue of what makes a successful film adaptation. Surveying their written responses, the study identifies some preconceptions that participants in a novel-to-film course bring to the comparative assessment of Jack Clayton's *The Innocents* and Ben Bolt's *The Turn of the Screw*, adaptations of Henry James's classic novella. The essay considers which key concepts in today's critical discourses surface in the student essays and which remain ignored, as it observes how the binaries of author/director vs. audience, closure vs. openness, and fidelity vs. creative independence are activated. Finally, the question is addressed

how students deal with the double bind of being invited to honor such mutually exclusive injunctions as the expectation that they embrace a non-hierarchical approach to the film-literature nexus and the obligation for them to prefer multivalent over monological interpretations. (ÁF)

The Return of “God’s Unworthy Handmaid”: Techniques of Subject Construction in *The Journal of Madam Knight* (1705)

Andr as Tarn oc

The essay examines how various instances of border crossings, both physical and metaphysical, contribute to subjectification as reflected in *The Journal of Madam Knight*. Relying on the Austin-Bollob as continuum of the performative along with utilizing Ulrich Neisser’s cognitive mapping model and Michel de Certeau’s view of walking as text production, the essay illustrates the fluidity of subjectification understood both as achieving agency and confirming submission to contemporary power. Although the means and the objective of Mrs. Knight’s journey (that is, horseback riding, settling a deceased relative’s estate, and providing a detailed description of the social and cultural aspects of the Connecticut and New York colonies) suggest defiance to contemporary female stereotypes, a closer reading reveals a compulsion to conform to romantic paternalistic expectations implied by a sub-text of fear, ethnocentric attitudes, and a reluctant acceptance of the symbolic order. (AT)

At the Expense of Others: Economic Inequality and the Horror Film
Sharon Diana King

The essay examines several horror films from around the globe that show the depraved effects of pleonexia—extreme economic inequity between classes or persons, with the concomitant desire to further the chasm. In *House on Haunted Hill* (US, 1959), *A Bell from Hell* (Spain, 1973), *The Island of Death* (Greece, 1976), *The House on the Edge of the Park* (Italy, 1980), and *Invitation Only* (Taiwan, 2009), the 1%, with their accompanying sense of privilege, consciously manipulate the lower classes—or indeed anyone they consider beneath them, as the entitled sometimes struggle amongst themselves—marking as abject all creatures but themselves. The abject, even those themselves guilty of crimes, become a source of twisted play,

entertainment, even artistic inspiration for the über-rich, within acts of revenge, cruelty, sadism, and humiliation. Those who have everything have little or nothing to lose, making greed and inequality a fertile field for onscreen horror. (SDK)

“I’m from Brooklyn”: Detection, Myth, and Religion in *Angel Heart*
Tamás Bényei

The essay reads Alan Parker’s 1987 film *Angel Heart* (as well as William Hjortsberg’s *Falling Angel* on which it is based) as a staging of the historically dominant theme of the gothic, namely the uneasy relationship between modernity and a lost transcendence: the transcendental dimension, thought to have been superseded, inevitably returns as something demonic as a result of having been repressed. Thus, in the film, religion in its many guises itself appears as uncanny through the mixing of genres (noir thriller and gothic horror) in the process labeled the “gothicization” of crime. The essay explores this process, unraveling some of the mythological allusions, addressing the role of the metaphysical and supernatural dimensions in the film (and the novel), and looking at the attitude of Parker’s film towards religion as the terrain of contacting alterity. (TB)

Spectral Media Technology and the Vicious Brothers’ *Grave Encounters*
Sarolta Mezei

Surrounded by millions of teletechnological innovations, connected via various channels and constantly available, people today rarely think about the quality these forms of communications take and, as a result, what qualities they embrace by participating in the digital world. The essay describes how developments of audiovisual communications have always been associated with the concept of spectrality and in what forms they emerge in today’s visual culture. The essay also investigates the cinematographic techniques of the found footage horror film by analyzing the imagery of *The Vicious Brothers’ Grave Encounters* and how this contemporary genre of horror film incorporates the spectral qualities that permeate the nature of teletechnological innovations: the ungraspability, the transparency, and the spatio-temporal existence of the ghost. Furthermore,

it elaborates on how found footage horror film addresses various issues of media technology, film production, and the subject formation processes in today's digital era by blurring the frames of the diegetic and non-diegetic, of reality and illusion. (SM)

Zombies along the Malecón
Bill Clemente

The essay offers a critical look at Alejandro Brugués's award-winning *Juan of the Dead* (2011), a Cuban-Spanish independent film. This zomcom chronicles the antics of the film's central character, Juan, as he struggles to survive in zombie-infested Havana. Taking advantage of the chaos, Juan creates a self-employed enterprise, "Juan of the Dead," that seeks to make money from killing infested relatives for family members. The film offers a wonderfully comic romp through Havana's iconic areas and, in the spirit of recent independent films that take advantage of the more relaxed censoring allowed by Raúl Castro, also looks at contemporary Cuban society with a critical smile. Among other things, the film pokes fun at everything from inoperable elevators to the uncertain future of the country after the death of the Castro brothers, from a joke of a city bus system to the marginalization of Afro-Cubans. (BC)