

Anna Pochmara-Ryżko

"From Slaves to the Bottle to Speakeasies and Champagne Baths"

ABSTRACT

The lecture will discuss a series of paradoxes and shifts in representations of alcohol use in canonical American literature. They will be presented in relation to the changing perspectives on gender, racial, religious, and class identities. I will demonstrate the tension between the American desire for self-discipline and self-mastery, on the one hand, and the zeal to discipline and police other bodies, on the other. Among the most significant of the changes discussed in the talk will be the shift from the religious concept of intemperance as sin to the medical notion of addiction. Additionally, I will analyze the twin paradox of aesthetic excess in fictions within temperance-related literature and disciplined, minimalist style in modernist fictions that frequently represent alcohol use as liberating. Selected works of American literature, spanning from the 1840s to the end of the Prohibition Era, will serve as the corpus.

BIO

Anna Pochmara is an Assistant Professor at the Institute of English Studies, the University of Warsaw. As a doctoral candidate, she received a Fulbright Junior Grant to do research at Yale University under academic guidance of Professor Hazel V. Carby. Her Ph.D. dissertation manuscript was mentioned as the runner-up in up in the 2009 Rob Kroes Publication Award competition organized by the European Association for American Studies. She is the author of over twenty articles and reviews in the field of American studies and *The Making of the New Negro: Black Authorship, Masculinity, and Sexuality* (2011), for which she received the Polish Minister of Science and Higher Education Award. Pochmara's current research project concerns the uses of temperance and intemperance in late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century African American literature.