

# **The Past in the Present: The American Uses of History**

**2008 Annual Conference Polish Association for American Studies  
American Studies Center**

University of Warsaw, 22-24 October 2008

## **CALL FOR PAPERS**

The topic of the conference is representation of the past in the United States and the British colonies, both of American history and the histories of other countries, regions, and ethnic or other groups, written, staged or filmed in the USA. The papers presented may focus on different discourses - historiography, literature, art, theater, and film - as well as, possibly, their interactions. The suggested areas of interest include:

- colonial and US historiography; its theory and history
- ideological issues related to representations of the past
- American exceptionalism and millenarism in historiography
- representations of history in American literature of different periods
- American histories of the other from William Prescott to the present times
- US representations of the Holocaust
- race and gender in historical representation
- history in the cinema from "The Birth of Nation" to "There Will be Blood"
- history, memory, and forgetting in American culture
- historical returns of the repressed

# PROGRAM

## Wednesday, 22 October

Main Campus, Krakowskie Przedmieście 26/28

**13:00 – 14:00 Registration**

**14:00 – 15:00 Conference opening**

Sala Balowa, Pałac Tyszkiewiczów-Potockich

*Chair:* Tomasz Basiuk

*Keynote address:* Donald A. Grinde, SUNY University at Buffalo “Marxism, Native Americans, and What Happens after the Dictatorship of the Proletariat”

**15:15 – 16:45**

**Session 1** “Alternative Histories” – Sala Brudzińskiego

*Chair:* Zofia Kolbuszewska

- Sascha Pöhlmann, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Munich  
“Cosmographic Metafiction in Sesshu Foster’s *Atomik Aztex*”
- Beata Marczyńska-Fedorowicz, UMCS, Lublin  
“America That Never Was: Alternative History in American Fiction”
- Paweł Pyrka, University of Warsaw  
“Watching the Watchmen. The Play of Masks and the Irreverent Exposure in Alan Moore’s Graphic Novel Watchmen”

**Session 2** “Notes of the Past: History and Music” – Sala Balowa

*Chair:* Paulina Ambroży-Lis

- Małgorzata Ziółek-Sowińska, University of Warsaw  
“History in the Music and Poetry of African American Spirituals”
- Radosław Rybkowski, Jagiellonian University, Cracow  
“Meaningless History? History in American Musical”
- Marta Marciniak, CUNY  
“Do you remember rock and roll radio?’ Punk as a 1970s Urban Subculture That Lives on in American Culture Today”

**Session 3** “Narratives of Exceptionalism” – Sala Kółtąta, Pałac Staszica

*Chair:* Clifford A. Bates

- David A. Jones, University of Warsaw, Joanna Waluk, University of Białystok  
“The Magic Became Tragic: The Special Diplomatic Exchange Between the Republic of Poland and the United States of America, 1934-1939”
- Anna Bendrat, UMCS, Lublin  
“A Tale of Two Historiosophies: Polish and American Exceptionalism in the Contemporary Context of War”
- Karol Derwich, Jagiellonian University, Cracow  
“American Exceptionalism in U.S. Latin American Policy at the Turn of the 20th Century”

**16:45 – 17:15 Coffee break**

**17:15 – 18:45**

**Session 4** “African-American Representations” – Sala Balowa

*Chair:* Justyna Kociatkiewicz

- Dominika Ferens, University of Wrocław  
“Diachronic vs. Synchronic Accounts of Cultural Difference in Paule Marshall’s *The Chosen Place, the Timeless People* (1969)”
- Elżbieta Rokosz-Piejko, University of Rzeszów  
“‘The past claws its way back.’ On the Use of Personal and National History in Toni Morrison’s *Paradise and Love*”
- Klara Szmańko, University of Wrocław  
“Representations of History in Ralph Ellison’s *Invisible Man*”

**Session 5** “History, Politics, Presidency” – Sala Kółtąta, Pałac Staszica

*Chair:* David A. Jones

- Zbigniew Kwiecień, University of Warsaw  
“The Past as a ‘Big Stick.’ Historical Arguments in Theodore Roosevelt’s Attacks on President Woodrow Wilson’s Foreign Policy, 1914-1916”
- Clifford A. Bates, University of Warsaw  
“The 2008 American Presidential Election: The Triumph of the ‘ONE’ as the Latest Next Stage of the Postmodern Presidency or the Stoic Non-Boomer Presidency?”

- Łukasz Wordliczek, Jagiellonian University, Cracow  
“The Past, the Present, and the Future: The Logic of Continuity in U.S. Foreign Policy”

**19:00 – 20:30**

**Session 6** “Atlantic Crossings: African American Memories” – Sala Balowa

*Chair:* Paweł Stachura

- Agnieszka Wróblewicz, UAM, Poznań  
“‘Six years a prisoner.’ The Uses of Enslavement in Royall Tyler’s *The Algerine Captive*”
- Olga Dudek, UMCS, Lublin  
“The History of American Slavery Inscribed in the Works of Former Slaves”
- Jerzy Kamionowski, University of Białystok  
“Out of the Time Endlessly Rocking: Audre Lorde’s Use of Dahomean Myths”

**Session 7** “Episodes of the Past” – Sala Kołłątaja, Pałac Staszica

*Chair:* Radosław Rybkowski

- Paweł Laidler, Jagiellonian University, Cracow  
“Does the Original Intent Count? The Past and the Present in the U.S. Supreme Court’s Decision-Making Process”
- Małgorzata Martynuska, University of Rzeszów  
“Redefining the American Dream – A History of an Idea Which Shaped the Nation”

**20:35 Reception** – Old Library Hall

**Thursday, 23 October**

**American Studies Center, Al. Niepodległości 22**

**9:30 – 10:30 Plenary Session**

Room 317

*Chair:* Agnieszka Salska

Yuri Stulov, Minsk State Linguistics University “Black History in Contemporary African American Fiction”

**10:45 – 12:15**

**Session 8** “Herstories in Black: Fiction by African American Women,” 319

*Chair:* Dominika Ferens

- Aneta Dybska, University of Warsaw  
“The Uses of Spatial Discourse in Gloria Naylor’s 1985 Novel *Linden Hills*”
- Ewa Klęczaj-Siara, UMCS, Lublin  
“Restoring Black Women’s Images in Faith Ringgold’s Picturebook *Dinner at Aunt Connie’s House*”
- Emilia Borowska, Catholic University of Lublin  
“Gayl Jones’ *Corregidora*: A Post-Cartesian Response to the Past Which Is Not Her Own”

**Session 9** “Popular Culture: Historicizing and Historicized,” 314

*Chair:* Ewa Grzeszczyk

- Włodzimierz Batóg, UJK, Kielce  
“The American 1960s: Historians’ Debate”
- Jacek Romaniuk, University of Warsaw  
“1960s at 40: The Uses of the 1968 Trope in the USA”
- Mirosław Aleksander Miernik, University of Warsaw  
“Zeitgeist, Change, and Subculture: The Case of Emo”

**Session 10** “Ethnic Past(s) and Present(s),” 310

*Chair:* Anna Sosnowska

- Anna Bartnik, Jagiellonian University, Cracow  
“The Past and the Present of Hispanics in American Society”
- Raimi Adeleke, Iowa State University “Interrogating the Black Cultural Nationalist Response to Globalization”

**Session 11** “Powers of History, Varieties of Trauma,” 317

*Chair:* Alicja Piechucka

- Marta Koval, Lviv Regional Institute of Public Administration  
“‘Holding out for a Hint of Harmony’: Music, History, and Identity Quest in Richard Powers’s Novel *The Time of Our Singing*”

- Agnieszka Glegoła, UMCS, Lublin  
“America is not your fault, but you are America’s fault.” History, Memory, and Forgetting in *Plowing the Dark* by Richard Powers”
- Mateusz Liwiński, Catholic University of Lublin  
”Retrofuturistic Impulse: Skeuomorphs of the Atomic Era in *Fallout*”

**12:15 – 12:45 Coffee break**

**12:45 – 14:15**

**Session 12** “The Returns of the Vanishing American,” 319

*Chair:* Marta Mazurek

- Elżbieta Wilczyńska, UAM, Poznań  
“History and Memory in Indian Fiction: James Welch’s *The Heartsong of Charging Elk* and Leslie Marmon Silko’s *Gardens in the Dunes*”
- Joanna Ziarkowska, University of Warsaw  
“Dancing for Survival: Reinterpretations of *Ghost Dance* in Leslie Marmon Silko’s *Gardens in the Dunes*”
- Artur Jaupaj, University of New York, Tirana  
“Thomas Berger’s *Little Big Man*: ‘The Return of the Vanishing American’”

**Session 13** “Historicizing the South,” 310

*Chair:* Jerzy Kamionowski

- Irina Kudriavtseva, Minsk State Linguistics University  
“Demythologizing the South in Peter Taylor’s Fiction”
- Beata Zawadka, University of Szczecin  
“Past into Present and Back: A (Mis)use of Southern History in Edward P. Jones’s *The Known World*”
- Beata Kenig, University of Warsaw  
“The Myth of the Old South and Its Hero: The Southern Gentleman and His Mission in the Selected Writings of the Southern Apologists and Gentlemen of the 1850s”

**Session 14** “From Mexico to Japan: Memories of the Other,” 317

*Chair:* Sascha Pöhlmann

- Jason Ruiz, University of Notre Dame  
“Americans in the Treasure House: Travels to Mexico in the U.S. Popular Imagination”
- Małgorzata Poks, ATH, Bielsko-Biała  
“Points for Mediation on the Nuclear Age: Thomas Merton and Gerald Vizenor”
- John Howard, King’s College, London  
“Japanese American Incarceration as Heroic National Fable”

**Session 15** “Rural Hours,” 314

*Chair:* Elżbieta Rokosz-Piejko

- Hanna Boguta-Marchel, University of Warsaw  
“Time in the Novels of Cormac McCarthy: From Recurrent Circularity to the Finality of Here and Now”
- Katarzyna Czerwiec-Dykiel, UMCS, Lublin  
“Environmental Component of Human History in Barbara Kingslover’s Prodigal Summer and William Least Heat-Moon’s Prairie Earth”
- Damian S. Pyrkosz, University of Rzeszów  
“The Past Revitalized: Preservation of the Rural America’s Cultural Heritage”

**14: 15 – 15: 15 Lunch**

**15:15 – 16: 15 Plenary session**

Room 317

*Chair:* William R. Glass

Erika Doss, University of Notre Dame “Who Owns Historical Memory? Commemorative Conflicts in the American Southwest”

**16:15 – 16:45 Coffee break**

**16:45 – 18:15**

**Session 16** “Icons of the Past; Moving and Still,” 317

*Chair:* Elżbieta Wilczyńska

- Katarzyna Spiechlanin, Jagiellonian University, Cracow  
“(Re)discovery of American Past in the Paintings of American Realists”
- Edyta Frelik, UMCS, Lublin  
“‘Ideas freed from events which brought them into being’: Jasper Johns’s Use of History”
- Dorota McKay, UMCS Lublin  
“Transformation of the Legend of Lawrence of Arabia: From British Colonial History to American Science Fiction”

**Session 17** “Female Signatures,” 319

*Chair:* Joanna Ziarkowska

- Agnieszka Graff, University of Warsaw  
“‘But this was not Nazi Germany. This was America.’ Revisiting the World War II Analogy in Betty Friedan’s *Feminine Mystique*”
- Aleksandra Szaniawska, University of Warsaw  
“‘Salt and Pepper’: The Unsettling Experiences among Black and White Women in the Civil Rights and Women’s Liberation Movement”
- Magdalena Misiaczek, Jagiellonian University, Cracow  
“The Past and the Present of Women’s Christian Temperance Union”

**Session 18** “Remembering the Holocaust,” 310

*Chair:* Anna Wortman

- Gustavo Sánchez Canales, Universidad Complutense de Madrid  
“‘In a different world, we could have been real friends’: Two Opposite Approaches to the Problem of Holocaust in Jonathan Safran Foer’s *Everything Is Illuminated*”
- Joanna Młynarczyk, UAM, Poznań  
“‘Memory is life’: The Need and Obligation to Remember in Mr. Sammler’s Planet and The Bellarosa Connection by Saul Bellow”
- Jolanta Kryda, University of Gdańsk  
“American Representations of the Holocaust: Isaac Bashevis Singer, Elie Wiesel, Noam Chomsky, and Norman Finkelstein”



**Session 19** “History, Memory, DeLillo,” 314

*Chair:* Paweł Frelik

- Katarzyna Kuczma, UAM, Poznań  
“Memory as Pharmakon in Don DeLillo’s Falling Man”
- Maciej Masłowski, University of Wrocław  
“‘Like nothing in this life’: The Concept of Historic Time in Don DeLillo’s Falling Man”
- Justyna Kociatkiewicz, University of Wrocław  
“History as Loss, History as Waste: American Twentieth Century in the Novels of Bellow and DeLillo”

**18:15 – 20:00 Reception**

**20:00 PAAS Meeting**

**Friday, 24 October**

**American Studies Center, Al. Niepodległości 22**

**9:30-10:30 Plenary session**

Room 317

*Chair:* Jadwiga Maszewska

Willam R. Glass, University of Warsaw “Do We Get to Win This Time? The Hollywood History of the Vietnam War”

**10:30 – 11:00 Coffee break**

**11:00 – 12:30**

**Session 20** “History and/in Poetry,” 319

*Chair:* Katarzyna Spiechlanin

- Paulina Ambroży-Lis, UAM, Poznań  
“‘It is this brokenness that interests me.’ The Aesthetics and Politics of Susan Howe’s Historical Poetry”
- Paweł Stachura, UAM, Poznań  
“The End of History in Whitman’s War Poems”

- Alicja Piechucka, University of Łódź  
“History Is Now”: Historical Experience and Historical Vacuum in T.S. Eliot and the French Symbolists”

**Session 21 “Spies and Agents,” 317**

*Chair:* Anna Bartnik

- Anna Wortman, University of Warsaw  
“From Heroes to Scapegoats: The Image of the FBI in American Popular Culture”
- Anna Krawczyk-Łaskarzewska, UWM, Olsztyn  
“The Zeitgeist Is Out There: History in The X-Files and The X-Files in History”
- James G. Ryan, Texas A&M University, Galveston  
“Historians of American Communism Remain in Denial”

**Session 22 “Ethnic Self-Fashioning(s),” 314**

*Chair:* Agnieszka Graff

- Karolina Krasuska, Viadrina University, Frankfurt (Oder)/University of Warsaw  
“The Renaissance of the Mongrel. American Moments in Mina Loy’s ‘Anglo-Mongrels and the Rose’”
- Tomasz Jacheć, Regent College, Elbląg  
“Joseph Heller’s God Knows – An Updated Narrative”

**12:45 – 13:45** Plenary session

Room 317

*Chair:* Marek Wilczyński

Keith Griffler, SUNY University at Buffalo “The Mythology of the Underground Railroad as Invention in National Memory of an Absent Tradition of White Racial Liberalism in America”

**13:45 – 14:00** Conference closing followed by lunch