

**American Crisis/American Renewal?
AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND
AMERICAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION
CONFERENCE PROGRAM**

November 24 – 25, 2021



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Conference Schedule

Schedule at a Glance

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9.00-10.15 Welcome and Keynote ADDRESS - Michael Thompson: Environmental Crisis and Renewal in the Global New Deal Era: A Biography of the 'Eleventh Commandment'				
10.15-10.45 Morning Tea				
Panels 10.45-12.15	Panel 1: Roundtable: <i>The Deportation Express: A History of America Through Forced Removal</i>	Panel 2: Political Life since the 1970s	Panel 3: Slavery	
12:15-1:00 Lunch				
Panels 1.00-2.30	Panel 4: Roundtable: <i>Racial Reckoning: Understanding the United States Long Struggle with Social Equity</i>	Panel 5: The Polarization of America?	Panel 6: Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Foreign Relations	
2.30-2.45 Afternoon Tea				
Panels 2.45-4.15	Panel 7: Roundtable: <i>Beyond the Bill of Rights: Expanding Conceptions of Citizenship & Civil Liberties, 1935-1985</i>	Panel 8: America on Screen	Panel 9: Fighting Oppression	
Day 2: Thursday 25th November 2021				
9.00-10.30 - Honouring Shane White: A Remarkable Career in History				
10.30-10.45 Morning Tea				
Panels 10.45 – 12.45	Panel 10: Race and Civil Rights	Panel 11: Cold War Culture	Panel 12: American Literature	Panel 13: Legacies of War
12.15-1.00 Lunch				
ANZASA AGM 3-4.45pm				

Detailed Schedule

Day 1 – Wednesday 24 November 2021

Time	Speaker	
9:00-10:15	WELCOME AND KEYNOTE ADDRESS	By MC & Michael Thompson: Join Here Environmental Crisis and Renewal in the Global New Deal Era: A Biography of the 'Eleventh Commandment'
10.15-10.45	MORNING TEA	
10.45 -12.15	PANELS	
	Day 1/Panel 1 – Roundtable: The Deportation Express: A History of America Through Forced Removal Join Here	
	The Deportation Express: A History of America Through Forced Removal	Ethan Blue University of Western Australia ethan.blue@uwa.edu.au Carolyn Strange Australian National University carolyn.strange@anu.edu.au Chin Jou University of Sydney chin.jou@sydney.edu.au Ian Tyrrell University of New South Wales i.tyrrell@unsw.edu.au
	Day 1/ /Panel 2 - Political Life Since the 1970's Join Here	
	Oregon v. Mitchell (1971): The 18-Year-Old Vote and Federal Power vs. States' Rights	Jennifer Frost University of Auckland j.frost@auckland.ac.nz
	Who is American?	María Luisa Ochoa-Fernández , <i>Seville University</i> maochoa35@gmail.com
	Digital Disillusionment: How Much Elitism Does Democracy Need in Times of Social Media?	Olga Thierbach McLean University of Hamburg olgatmclean@gmail

	Day 1/Panel 3 – Slavery Join Here	
	Beginnings in Endings: the survivance of enslaved families and partnerships in the Antebellum South.	Xavier Reader University of Western Australia 2150407 I@student.uwa.edu.au
	The London Emancipation Society and Transatlantic Abolitionism in the Civil War Era, 1859-1865	Kate Rivington Monash University kate.rivington@monash.edu
	"Thousands now unhappy": Slave petitions in eighteenth-century Connecticut	Isabelle Laskaris Monash University Isabelle.Laskaris@monash.edu
12.15 – 1.00	LUNCH BREAK	
1.00 – 2.30	PANELS	
	Day 1/Panel 4 – Roundtable: Racial Reckoning: Understanding the United States Long Struggle with Social Equity Join Here	
	Crafting a New View of Blackness: Monroe Work and The Negro Year Book	Julian Chambliss Michigan State University chamb191@msu.edu
	Press, Pulpit, and Politics: Mapping the Local-Global Activism of Rev. J. Francis Robinson, 1885-1930	Scot French University of Central Florida scot.french@ucf.edu
	Mumbai, Augsburg, and Mexico City: Economic Histories of Displacement and Inequity in Global Context	Walter Greason Macalester College Email: wgreason@macalester.edu
	Partnerships in Historically Black Spaces: Cultivating Community, Creating Change	Michelle Bachelor Robinson Spelman College mrobin50@spelman.edu
	Day 1/Panel 5 – The Polarization of America? Join Here	
	Interpretation and Contestation	David Goodman University of Melbourne d.goodman@unimelb.edu.au
	A Century of Logics of Solidarity in the USA: Are Grounds of Social Cohesion Less Extensive Than in the Past?	Samuel Lucas University of California-Berkeley Lucas@berkeley.edu
	1976's American Revolutionary Bicentennial, the Ford Administration and Civil Religion in an Age of Fracture	Thomas Cryer University College London, Institute of the Americas thomas.cryer.21@ucl.ac.uk
	Day 1/Panel 6 - Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Foreign Relations Join Here	

2.30- 2.45	“The Plain Mr., in His Plain Dress”: Diplomatic Uniforms in the Early Republic	Gavin Campbell Doshisha University gcampbel@mail.doshisha.ac.jp
	Halted at the River’s Mouth: Implementing and Experiencing Maritime Quarantine in Colonial America, 1720-1775.	Toby Nash University of Michigan tjnash@umich.edu
	AFTERNOON TEA	
2.45 – 4.15	PANELS	
Day 1/Panel 7: Roundtable: Beyond the Bill of Rights: Expanding Conceptions of Citizenship & Civil Liberties, 1935-1985 Join Here		
	Contesting Civil Liberties in the Workplace: From Workers’ Rights to the Right to Work, 1935-1947	Dolores Janiewski Victoria University of Wellington Dolores.Janiewski@vuw.ac.nz
	Safeguarding the rights to privacy, security, and protection against self-incrimination from Police Transgressions: The American Civil Liberties Union, the Supreme Court, and expansion of the Bill of Rights to Protect Criminal Suspects	Hayden Thorne Victoria University of Wellington hayden.thorne@vuw.ac.nz
	Coming Out Swinging: The Homophile Movement, Gay Liberation and the Visibility/Respectability Strategy for Sexual Citizenship, 1960–1985.	Liam Perkins Victoria University of Wellington Liam.Perkins@vuw.ac.nz
Day 1/Panel 8 - America on Screen		
	<i>Cinéma du Ressentiment</i> : Hollywood and Resurgent Aggrievement Politics	Stuart Cottle University of Sydney Stuart.cottle@sydney.edu.au
	Wild Card Joker: Todd Phillips’ <i>Joker</i> (2019) and the Critique of Trump’s America	Joel Ephraims University of Sydney jeph3931@uni.sydney.edu.au
	Can there be angels in America? Representations of affect in HIV/AIDS visual narratives and the experience of citizenship	Leonardo Cascao University Coimbra leonardocascao@gmail.com
Day 1/Panel 9 – Fighting Oppression Join Here		
	My how I have walked and worked to get those names”: Petitioning and the Women’s Suffrage Movement in the Progressive era	Tim Verhoeven Monash University tim.verhoeven@monash.edu

	A Crisis of Character: The Sexual Reputation of American Women and Breaking from the English Law of Slander	Jessica Lake Australian Catholic University Jessica.Lake@acu.edu.au
	From Civil Rights to Human Rights: How a small group of American civil rights lawyers began and nearly created another rights revolution	Maria Armoudian University of Auckland m.armoudian@auckland.ac.nz
End of Day 1		

Day 2- Tuesday 25 November

Time	Session	Speaker/s
9.00 – 10.30	Honouring Shane White: A Remarkable Career in History	Michael Ondaatje Australian Catholic University Richard Waterhouse University of Sydney Deirdre O’Connell University of Sydney Nicholas Gebhardt Birmingham City University Stephen Robertson George Mason University Sarah C. Dunstan Queen Mary University
10.30- 10.45	MORNING TEA	
	PANELS	
	Day 1/Panel 10 – Race and Civil Rights Join Here	
	Race, Law, and Aluminum: Harris A. Parson and Twenty Years of Workplace Struggle	D. Caleb Smith Tulane University dsmith47@tulane.edu
		Harry Melkonian Macquarie University Harry.Melkonian@mq.edu.au
	Civil Rights, Gun Rights: The Armed Backlash Against the Civil Rights Movement	Daniel Fleming Macquarie University Daniel.Fleming@uon.edu.au
	What is the civil rights movement?	John A. Kirk University of Arkansas at Little Rock jakirk@ualr.edu
	Who is American?: The Case of Latinos in a United States of America in Crisis	María Luisa Ochoa-Fernández Seville University maochoa35@gmail.com

Day 2/Panel 11 – Cold War Culture	
The Ugly American: A History	Brendon O'Connor University of Sydney b.oconnor@usyd.edu.au
<i>The Quiet American</i> Film Adaptations and the Melancholia Therein	Scarlette Nhi Do Australian National University Scarlette.do@anu.edu.au
<i>Sputnik I</i> and Crisis at the Dawn of the Space Age	Tom Wilkinson University of Auckland twil798@aucklanduni.ac.nz
<i>The Steel Helmet</i> : Black America and Hollywood's Korean War	Chris Dixon Macquarie University Chris.dixon@mq.edu.au Jessica Johnson Macquarie University Jessica.johnson@mq.edu.au
Day 2/Panel 12 – American Literature	
Reading Early American Utopia Today	Hannah Lauren Murray University of Liverpool hannah.murray@liverpool.ac.uk
'Renewing the Short Story During the American Rental Crisis, 1973–1993'	Nina Ellis University of Cambridge fce20@cam.ac.uk
How Whiteness Claimed the Future. The Always New Vs. the Always Now in US-American Literature	Mariya Nikolova Universität Potsdam & Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin nikolova@uni-potsdam.de
Monstrous Ecologies: Reconfiguring 'Human' in Jeff VanderMeer's <i>Southern Reach</i> Trilogy	Toyah Webb University of Sydney tweb2408@uni.sydney.edu.au
Day 2/Panel 13 – Legacies of War	
The American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission	Frances Clarke University of Sydney Frances.clarke@sydney.edu.au
The Plumb Plan and 1919 Moment	Paul Michael Taillon University of Auckland p.taillon@auckland.ac.nz
No Place for Old Men: The Middle-aged Soldier Misses Home	Troy Rule University of Western Australia trule@iinet.net.au

	The Dangers of Bad Precedent: The Exclusion and Incarceration of Japanese Americans	Daniel Cseh Eötvös Loránd University cseh.daniel@btk.elte.hu
END OF DAY 2		
12:15- 1:00	LUNCH	
1:00-2:00	ANZASA AGM Join Here	

List of Abstracts (by Day/Panel)

Day 1/Panel 1/ - Roundtable: The Deportation Express: A History of America through Forced Removal

The Deportation Express: A History of America through Forced Removal

Ethan Blue, University of Western Australia; Carolyn Strange, Australian National University; Chin Jou, University of Sydney; Ian Tyrrell, University of New South Wales

This panel will discuss *The Deportation Express: A History of America through Forced Removal* (University of California Press, 2021), by ANZASA member Ethan Blue.

The United States, celebrated as a nation of immigrants and the land of the free, has developed the most extensive system of imprisonment and deportation that the world has ever known. *The Deportation Express* examines the history of US deportation, assessing the development of American deportation trains: a network of prison railroad cars repurposed by the Immigration Bureau to link jails, hospitals, asylums, and workhouses across the country and allow forced removal with terrifying efficiency. It pays close attention migrants' travels through global racial capitalism, and their capture by the American to carceral state. The trains' material and bureaucratic infrastructure, developed a century ago, laid the roots of the current moment, as immigrant restriction and mass deportation once again play critical and troubling roles in contemporary politics and legislation.

Panelists will offer short commentaries (10 minutes) on the book, and open ground for discussion with the author and audience.

Day 1/Panel 2 - Political Life since the 1970's

Oregon v. Mitchell (1970): The 18-Year-Old Vote and Federal Power vs. States' Rights

Jennifer Frost, University of Auckland

After the Voting Rights Act of 1970 enfranchised United States citizens 18 years and older, the states of Oregon and Texas sued the US Attorney General, John Mitchell, seeking an injunction against enforcing the 18-year-old vote. The case headed to the Supreme Court. With the 1972 election soon approaching, the case moved quickly. *Oregon v. Mitchell* was argued in October and decided in December 1970. At stake was the relationship between states' rights and federal power, an issue that originated with the nation's founding. Oregon and Texas argued they had the right to determine the minimum age for voting in their states, not Congress. Eight of the nine justices divided evenly, with four in favor of the states and four in favor of Congress. In a remarkable development, the ninth, Justice Hugo Black, split the difference both ways, forming a majority of one. Black issued the Court's opinion that Congress could set the voting age for federal but not for state and local elections. Hundreds of citizens both for and against the decision wrote to

Justice Black. This paper will examine their responses and arguments and analyze what they saw at stake in the Court's decision.

Who is American?

María Luisa Ochoa-Fernández, Seville University

The Case of Latinos in a United States of America in Crisis It is no secret that as a nation the United States has been experiencing a crisis for some time now. It is not a crisis from the outside but from the inside. Racial tensions together symbol of liberty and democracy: the Capitol building. The Trump administration's extreme and incendiary rhetoric against immigrants polarized and radicalized society to the extent that open cracks became visible in the idealized dream of the melting pot metaphor of the old times. This paper focuses on the largest minority group and also largest immigrant group in the US: the Latinos. Trump often portrayed them, especially those of Mexican origin, as "the bad guys" conferring upon them the status of the Other, the intruder that needs to be expelled; ignoring the fact that the Hispanic presence in North America dates back to the 16th century. This paper will analyze the importance of this group within the nation and as well as its stereotypical portrayal during Trump's presidential campaigns and administration. Making Latinos feel like strangers at home inevitably raises questions of identity and who is American.

Digital Disillusionment: How Much Elitism Does Democracy Need in Times of Social Media?

Olga Theirbach-McLean, University of Hamburg

When social media platforms emerged as a new mode of communication, they were widely celebrated as a rejuvenating cure for democratic culture. By removing the gatekeeping function of traditional media outlets and allowing for the free flow of information between private individuals, thus the common refrain, they would foster a more egalitarian, interconnected, and politically engaged society. In some ways, such effects have indeed materialized, not least in the form of largely Internet-based social justice campaigns like Black Lives Matter and Me Too. But especially in the times of Trumpism and COVID-19, there is a mounting sense that the societal cost of unfiltered peer-to-peer communication may outweigh its benefits. In the face of a wave of political violence and a rising pandemic death toll, platforms like Facebook and Twitter are increasingly coming under attack as hotbeds of misinformation and ideological division. The rampant *fa bu l ism* of the Trump era has thus been a rude awakening from the utopian dream of digital democracy as a self-regulating marketplace of ideas. As a corollary, a fundamental democratic tenet has been put into question, namely the notion that unrestricted expression of private opinion is the lifeblood of a healthy mass democracy. This paper takes stock of the current renegotiation of the concept of free speech in the U.S. by looking at how the interlinked crises of pandemic and political polarization are triggering regulatory efforts to reign in the freewheeling communication culture on social media. At a moment of intensifying conflict between egalitarian and elitist principles, it specifically investigates the question of how much authoritative oversight democratic expression needs to keep the social fabric intact.

Day 1/Panel 3 – Slavery

Beginnings in Endings: the survivance of enslaved families and partnerships in the Antebellum South.

Zavier Reader, University of Western Australia

Enslaved families and partnerships of the Antebellum South have long been examined through the framework of and familial 'survival' versus 'destruction'. Whilst this scholarship has been of tremendous importance, the problem inherent within this mode of inquiry is that every analysis is necessarily entrenched within the limitations of this binary. The categories of 'survival' and 'destruction' are unable to adequately reflect the propensity for fluidity, mutability and persistence that many enslaved families and partnerships fostered, particularly evident through fictive kinships and the navigation of coerced partnerships. This paper addresses this problem through the application of the theory of Survivance, first conceptualised by First Nations scholar Gerald Vizenor. Survivance is of particular utility for application to enslaved families and partnerships for its ability to move beyond the survival versus destruction binary, to recognise not just methods of 'surviving', but the active experience of continuing to exist, to become flux and fluid in nature, but above all, to recognise the tremendous tendency for renewal. Drawing on the theory of survivance, this paper presents a new analysis of enslaved families and partnerships within American slavery that moves beyond the paradigm of 'survival' versus 'destruction', and recognises the ways families and partnerships changed, augmented, and re-formed in the face of crisis.

The London Emancipation Society and Transatlantic Abolitionism in the Civil War Era, 1859-186

Kate Rivington, Monash University

This paper explores the understudied role of the London Emancipation Society (LES) in rallying British public support for the Union cause during the American Civil War. The British public were split in their views on the war, as the cotton-reliant textile industries of Northern England were devastated by the conflict. Furthermore, abolitionism in Britain had begun to wane as older generations of reformers aged. It was during this turbulent and unsettled time that a new abolitionist organisation came to the fore in Britain—the London Emancipation Society. The LES breathed new life into British abolitionism. However, it has received much less attention from scholars than other anti-slavery organisations. In this paper I detail the establishment and the activities of the LES. I also detail the involvement of American abolitionists in the society and argue that the LES played an important role in transatlantic abolitionism and should be fundamentally understood as a transatlantic organisation.

"Thousands now unhappy": Slave petitions in eighteenth-century Connecticut

Isabelle Laskaris, Monash University

This paper examines four slave petitions for abolition in eighteenth-century Connecticut. Limited as it is, the existing scholarship on Connecticut slavery focuses on the nineteenth century and has argued that Connecticut took a more conservative approach to slavery and emancipation than other New England states. This focus on Connecticut's conservative approach to emancipation has overshadowed slave resistance in the region in the eighteenth century. While the Massachusetts slave petitions of 1773 and 1774 have received scholarly attention, these Connecticut slave petitions are rarely examined or integrated into the wider story of New England resistance. However, these Connecticut petitions are some of the oldest slave petitions in the Atlantic world and provide significant insight into the actions and voices of enslaved people. Although similar in some ways to the Massachusetts petitions, particularly in their attempts to ally with the Revolutionary cause, diverse voices and diverse expectations are also visible in these petitions. Even though their attempt was less well-received by the legislature, it is important to study these efforts because they demonstrate the depth of resistance in the region and help us to understand how slavery was experienced in Connecticut.

Day 1/Panel 4 –Roundtable: Racial Reckoning: Understanding the United States Long Struggle with Social Equity

While contemporary moments hold many challenges at home and abroad, the United States' current social, political, and economic crisis have their roots in long unresolved questions linked to race, identity, and power. From 1880 to 1940, Black Americans openly debated the meaning of citizenship and in doing so linked their concerns about American liberty to global freedom debates. The ideas articulated by Black Americans offered important frameworks to imagine freedom, not just as an abstraction, but as a vital project of individual and collective action. From speculative fiction to grassroots community activism many Black voices sought to imagine a more equitable world by defining freedom, creating alternative structures, and advocating for new political visions. This panel highlights the dynamic ideology of renewal offered by Black America. These past efforts offer a window into future work.

Crafting a New View of Blackness: Monroe Work and The Negro Year Book

Julian Chambliss, Michigan State University

Known today for his work documenting lynching, Monroe Work, the head of the Tuskegee University Department of Records and Research, was dedicated to using statistical data to make a robust case for African American progress. Work's vision of education as a tool for uplift embraced data collection to make a case for Black progress. His research and publication documented Black economic development while also making clear the effects of systemic discrimination. Work's statistical work at Tuskegee University provides the foundation of social, political, and economic activism in the early 20th century. While his scholarship was defining, one publication he orchestrated, *The Negro Year Book* (NYB), is deserving of greater attention. A compendium of statistical data compiled from 1912 to 1952, the NYB is the only source for facts and information on Black communities and individuals throughout the South. Assembled to provide "... not only the important facts of the history of the Negro, but also a great mass of detailed information concerning present conditions and the progress of the race." A consideration of NYB offers essential insights about structural limitation and their lasting legacy that remain central to Black activism.

Press, Pulpit, and Politics: Mapping the Local-Global Activism of Rev. J. Francis Robinson, 1885-1930

Scot French, University of Central Florida

The mass digitization of historical newspapers has made vast new sources of biographical information available to scholars researching African American civil rights activism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Interactive mapping tools allow us to plot the movement of individuals from community to community and illuminate broad patterns of geographic mobility, grassroots organizing, and institutional networking. This paper will present a digitally enabled "spatial biography" of the Rev. J. Francis Robinson (1862-1930) as a case study in post-emancipation community organizing and race leadership in a highly mobile age. Born to enslaved parents in Winchester, Virginia, Robinson was educated in a local freedmen's school before the seminary, he joined a Black leadership class that used the church pulpit and print media to push for racial equality. Robinson held church posts in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and at least 15 U.S. cities before becoming traveling field secretary for the National Baptist Convention. He also edited several Black newspapers. His institutional affiliations included T. Thomas Fortune's Afro-American League, Booker T. Washington's National Business League, Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association, and William Jernagin's National Race Congress.

Mumbai, Augsburg, and Mexico City: Economic Histories of Displacement and Inequity in Global Context

Walter Greason, Macalester College

The field of economics too often takes historical analysis for granted. Indeed, the specific engagements with evidence about the past is often limited by both method and ideology. One of the key examples of this limitation is the understanding of global industrialization at the start of the twentieth century. Three specific locations - Mumbai, Augsburg, and Mexico City (between 1880 and 1930) - illustrate the absence of historical evidence in the economic analysis of industrial growth. In contrast, the emphasis on London, New York City, and Chicago in the presentation of the hagiography about capital growth served the political goals of imperialism and neo-colonialism. Both approaches to this intellectual project require greater commitments to primary sources. While African-American urban history provides an abundance of material to correct the record in the study of North America, its methodology also provides a substantial intervention in the understanding of world history. Asset value analysis allows scholars to construct detailed models of historical economies based on multiple sets of primary sources. These models then provide stronger evidence for the actual evolution of capitalism in global and social context between the Gilded Age and the Great Depression.

Partnerships in Historically Black Spaces: Cultivating Community, Creating Change

Michelle Bachelor Robinson, Spelman College

Community-engaged scholarship is a growing field, creating best practices for providing students with experiential learning experiences that benefit the students as well as the communities they serve. Community has long been the secret sauce to sustaining historically Black spaces. In 2019, through a Mellon Foundation grant-funded initiative, Spelman College sought to create a project to foster partnerships between six Historically Black Colleges and Universities and communities in close proximity to the institutions. Through these "town and gown" partnerships, faculty, students, and community leaders worked for more than a year to collaboratively design historic preservation projects. Community teams focus on understanding and preserving space central to the enduring past circumstances, but feeding into a larger gee-mapping historic Black towns and settlements virtual space for the future. This multifaceted project has raised the visibility of each community, highlighted historic community spaces, and provide a digital showcase to promote the places and spaces central to black visions of stability and progress.

Day 1/Panel 5 – The Polarization of America?

Should Historians have more to say about polarization?

David Goodman, University of Melbourne

The rise of social media has provoked endless concern about the new technology's enabling, even fostering, of think-alike communities. The debate is dominated by scholars from political science and communications studies, who often regard recent levels of polarization as unprecedented. Polarization today is ideological but also social, matched by

increasing levels of partisan spatial segregation. This is explicable if we move away from Habermasian ideals of a neutral public sphere of rational debate to think more about identity – Chris Bail’s 2021 book *Breaking the Social Media Prism* observes that when partisans today step outside their social media echo chambers they experience not ‘a better competition of ideas, but a vicious competition of identities.’ Americans on the eve of World War II were also highly ideologically polarized and segregated. In 1940-1941, both anti-interventionists and interventionists commonly reported that everyone they knew or came across thought just as they did. High distrust of mainstream media helped foster think-alike communities in which people reinforced each other’s beliefs. Dr. Albert A. Vail, principal of the high school in Breese, Illinois, asked a Missouri Friends of Social Justice meeting: “How ... are the people to get the true facts? By reading the newspapers? (Laughter) By listening to the radio? (Laughter).” The paper draws on the records of the Los Angeles Jewish Federation of Los Angeles Community Relations Committee and its surveillance of far-right nationalist groups to consider these questions of polarisation and the media.

A Century of Logics of Solidarity in the USA: Are Grounds of Social Cohesion Less Extensive Than in the Past?

Samuel Lucas, University of California-Berkeley

A Century of Logics of Solidarity in the USA: Are Grounds of Social Cohesion Less Extensive Than in the Past? Samuel R. Lucas University of California-Berkeley Lucas@berkeley.edu The concept of nation-building recognizes that nations are socially constructed. Especially in secular, democratic, and/or diverse would-be states, cultural institutions must create a national identity and try to imbue individuals with that identity. One important part of national identity is what I term a logic of solidarity, a coherent perspective that “makes sense” of who is included/advantaged and who is not in multiple domains. New would-be nations often self-consciously engage in nation-building, but nation-building is never truly finished, as each new generation must be imbued with identities conducive to the continuation of the nation-state. Many see the United States as politically and culturally polarized and wonder whether fracture could occur within the lifetime of current citizens. One precursor for fracture is that visible logics of solidarity either undermine or fail to buttress nationhood. Is this precursor evident? Using films, an important source and artifact of cultural logics for issues of gender, race, sexual expression, sexual orientation, and more, this paper identifies highly visible logics of solidarity in the U.S. Analyzing both top grossing movies and critically acclaimed films between 1914 and 2019, this paper interrogates a precursor to national rupture by tracing logics of U.S. solidarity over a century

1976’s American Revolutionary Bicentennial, the Ford Administration and Civil Religion in an Age of Fracture

Thomas Cryer, University College London, Institute of the Americas

"An age of apathy, narcissism and societal fragmentation. An age where change was “life itself.” An unashamedly ostentatious President replaced through a highly contentious presidential succession. The inauguration of a pragmatic yet philosophically un-inspiring and occasionally frail President. The aftermath of economic crisis and a humiliating retreat in Asia. Not 2021, but 1976, coincidentally the year of the Bicentennial of America’s Revolution. This paper, based upon my master’s thesis, utilises a ‘memory studies’ approach to explore how Americans understood, debated and redefined their Revolutionary heritage in marking this commemoration. Amidst what Daniel Rodgers calls an “Age of Fracture”, did history prove a unifying factor? Were celebrations shaped by or against the Ford administration’s official commemorations? And, in an era of myriad pressing present concerns, did Americans ultimately care? Through carefully selected case studies, this work aims to stress Bicentennial commemorations’ political salience and Ford’s consistent attempts to utilise the Bicentennial to complement his image as a self-described ‘middle-of-the-road’ ‘healing’ President ahead of 1976’s presidential election. Doing so sheds light on the intersection of American public history and memory; the rightward turn’s invocation of American civil religion; and the politico-intellectual impact of conceptions of national aging, enervation, decline, and renewal."

Day 1/Panel 6 – Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Foreign Relations

“The Plain Mr., in His Plain Dress”: Diplomatic Uniforms in the Early Republic

Gavin Campbell, Doshisha University

Beginning in the early nineteenth century, courts across Europe began codifying dress codes that marked hierarchies of power within courts and between states. As representatives of a republic, American diplomats loudly denounced European court fashion, while also feeling helpless to do much more than complain. By 1853, however, with patriotism and “Young America” sentiment at their zenith, the State Department issued its “Dress Circular,” which advised diplomats that whenever possible, they should don “the simple dress of an American citizen.” America would seize its manifest destiny in plain wool. Yet not every part of the diplomatic establishment agreed with the new sartorial direction. A few diplomats felt that by insulting the standards imposed on all nations at court, America would complicate

its ambitions for mere want of gold braiding. In Japan, meanwhile, American representatives believed a more belligerent tone would yield quicker results and ignored the State Department's advice. By the 1850s, in short, diplomatic dress had become an extremely important symbol of America's role on the global stage.

By taking advantage of work in transnational encounters, and in the culture of diplomacy, this paper demonstrates the importance of dress in fashioning the state, both at home and abroad.

Halted at the River's Mouth: Implementing and Experiencing Maritime Quarantine in Colonial America, 1720-1775.

Toby Nash, University of Michigan

This paper will explore the development of quarantine as a process and a legal and cultural regime in the mid-eighteenth century. I will focus on the ports of Boston, Philadelphia, and New York, examining at the complications that arise in terms of on-water enforcement and governance, such as: false declarations, escapes from isolation, and moral and medical dilemmas. In this, I strive answer two key questions in this piece: how was the maritime quarantine process developed in British America? And what challenges in enforcement, governance, and social control occur in this process? These fundamental difficulties include: the commercial incentive of merchants and townspeople to smuggle quarantine persons and goods into port, the will of those uninfected—isolated on ships and desert islands in close quarters with a spreading infection—to escape a situation that almost guaranteed death. Inspecting the failures and troublesome governance at the river's mouth reveals the uncertainty of imperial management as a whole. Scrutinizing the difficulties that local and imperial governments faced in executing an effective quarantine regime reveals a larger imperial struggle to maintain social control across a wide maritime expanse as well as the divergent priorities, anxieties, and fragilities of the eighteenth-century British Empire.

Day 1/Panel 7: Roundtable: Beyond the Bill of Rights: Expanding Conceptions of Citizenship & Civil Liberties, 1935-1985

Originally conceived by elite men concerned primarily about their individual political and civil rights, the conception of civil liberties enumerated in the Bill of Rights has been the subject of efforts to expand their scope by civil libertarians, officials, activists, lawyers, and judges. This panel spans five active decades (1935-1985). New Deal activists sought to include the workplace in the public sphere and reconceive freedom of assembly as freedom of association and a collective right to unionise. Dolores Janiewski discusses this effort to expand civil liberties defeated by a conservative backlash in 1947. In the 1960s the Supreme Court under Chief Justice Earl Warren expanded civil liberties through the incorporation of the 14th amendment to impose Bill of Rights protections on the actions of states and local law enforcement. Hayden Thorne discusses this "due process revolution" that imposed constraints on police to protect the civil liberties of criminal suspects and defendants. In the 1960s, Gays and Lesbians organised to claim the right to free sexual expression, decriminalise homosexuality, and combat sexual discrimination. Liam Perkins will detail the strategies used to broaden the scope of citizenship beyond civil, political, and social to include sexual citizenship and equal rights for sexual minorities.

Contesting Civil Liberties in the Workplace: From Workers' Rights to the Right to Work, 1935-1947

Dolores Janiewski, Victoria University of Wellington

The paper explores the conflict over civil liberties in the workplace between exponents of the necessity for federal intervention and opponents. The battle between defenders of extension of civil liberties into the workplace and opponents began with the passage of the National Labor Relations Act [NLRA] in 1935, and the empowered National Labor Relations Board [NLRB] it created. As the paper will demonstrate, it concluded with the conservative counter-revolution secured by the 1947 passage of the Labor Management Act (Taft-Hartley) which restored power to employers not only constraining unions, but also preventing the extension of civil liberties into the workplace.

As conceived by its defenders, the NLRB protected freedom of speech, association, and privacy essential to the right to organise collectively. According to NLRB opponents, the NLRA violated employers' constitutional liberties through federal interference with private enterprise and violations of employers' right to control the workplace. As the paper will demonstrate, Taft-Hartley not only weakened the NLRA but thwarted efforts to implement a "second Bill of Rights" and the "economic democracy" Franklin Roosevelt conceived as essential for the exercise civil liberties for "necessitous" Americans.

Safeguarding the rights to privacy, security, and protection against self-incrimination from Police Transgressions: The American Civil Liberties Union, the Supreme Court, and expansion of the Bill of Rights to

Protect Criminal Suspects

Hayden Thorne, Victoria University of Wellington

During the 1960s, the United States Supreme Court waged what has been called a 'due process revolution' under the leadership of Chief Justice Earl Warren, a former prosecutor and California Attorney-General, and his civil libertarian colleagues, to require the states to respect the civil liberties enumerated in the Bill of Rights through the 'incorporation' of the Fourteenth Amendment's due process clause. Scholarship on this period largely focusses on the Justices, especially Warren, Hugo Black, William O. Douglas, and William Brennan. The court-centric narratives are supplemented by work that places incorporation into the broader context of social and political change. What has been neglected are legal advocates who persuaded a Supreme Court majority to expand civil liberties protects to defendants being subjected to police raids and interrogations. This paper will demonstrate that the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) played an important role in this 'due process revolution' through skilled and persistent legal advocacy for people without the economic resources to assert their rights. The analysis will focus on the *Mapp v. Ohio* (1961) and *Miranda v. Arizona* (1966) to show that the ACLU's advocacy in those cases was a vital ingredient in expansion of Bill of Rights protections to curb the power of the police.

Coming Out Swinging: The Homophile Movement, Gay Liberation and the Visibility/Respectability Strategy for Sexual Citizenship, 1960–1985.

Liam Perkins, Victoria University of Wellington

Gay visibility and 'coming out', in the parlance of the liberationists played a vital role in the immediate and long-term successes of the gay liberation movement and its successors. Historians of the American gay rights movement have yet to fully understand the full effects of coming out in the 1960s and 1970s and how coming out became the modus operandi for gay organizing. How did focusing on visibility help to achieve political and social goals? How did a hostile public react to a once taboo minority asserting claims to civil rights? This work focuses on the central strategic role that revealing or concealing one's sexuality has played in achieving gay political and social victories between the 1960s and 1980s. Analysing how the early homophile movement handled visibility and how their radical and liberal successors espoused it to achieve their goals enables a greater understanding of why gay men and lesbians have, in a relatively short period of time, achieved a remarkable degree of enshrined legal equality and sexual citizenship in the years since 1969.

Day 1/Panel 8: America on Screen

Cinéma du Ressentiment: Hollywood and Resurgent Aggrievement Politics

Stuart Cottle, University of Sydney

One of the most bracing aspects of recent turns in American politics, and global developments more broadly, has been the resurgence of a collective affect once known as *ressentiment*. *Ressentiment* was a major issue for 19th and 20th century political philosophy. Famously for Nietzsche and Scheler, *ressentiment* expressed itself as a collective expression of bitter social hostility, hatred and envy, born in a position of perceived weakness or subjugation. In the Fukuyamist climate of the 1990s and early 2000s, we were told that we had left the old forms of social and economic antagonism that characterized the 20th century behind. Yet in the contemporary world, *ressentiment* seems to be a powerful, indeed world-making, political force once again. We find allegations that it fuels the insurgent activism and political psychology of both the Trumpist Right and the "woke" millennial Left in America. It seems to deflect the way contemporary conversations about race, class and gender are being discussed in the American public sphere. Whether *ressentiment* is legitimate or not has always made it a contentious diagnosis. Yet as an *affect* it seems frighteningly present and unavoidable. We find this then reflected in recent American cinema which has helped us to learn to feel *ressentiment* once again, as a decidedly ambiguous impulse towards revenge and symbolic vindication. This paper examines how a trio of recent high profile Hollywood films *Blade Runner 2049* (2017), *Us* (2019), and *Promising Young Woman* (2020) which suggest an emerging American *cinéma du ressentiment*.

Can there be angels in America? Representations of affect in HIV/AIDS visual narratives and the experience of citizenship

Leonardo Cascao, University of Coimbra

On the 30th anniversary of Tony Kushner's play, this paper analyses the representations of affect and emotion on homoaffective film narratives that portray the HIV/AIDS epidemic of the 1980s, providing audiences with depictions of intimacy in a crisis scenario. The main cultural objects in question are *Angels in America* (2003), directed by Mike Nichols, and *The Normal Heart* (2014), directed by Ryan Murphy.

The core of the approach is affect theory applied to cultural, literary and film studies, focusing on representations of love, fragility, and intimacy when affected by disease. Under scope is how the characters' demonstration of affect for each other generates an emotional response, but also how these representations reveal that affects are social constructions linked to particular contexts.

The goal is to examine how the representations of affect humanise a marginal community. With that in mind, it will also focus on how identities are formed in the narratives at hand. I focus on these narratives' success in representing the gay community and the issues it has continuously faced in the USA. The depicted affects engage the questions of belonging and citizenship at the core of the narratives, and that leads to an overview of how the portrayal of the HIV/AIDS epidemic helps make sense of the notions of affective and intimate citizenship.

Wild Card Joker: Todd Phillips' *Joker* (2019) and the Critique of Trump's America

Joel Ephraims, University of Sydney

In my paper, I will investigate how Todd Phillips' film, *Joker* (2019) reinterprets the genre of the superhero movie to expose the economic, political and moral crises of Trump's America. In its flipping of generic expectations, Phillips' film calls for social renewal not by a fascistic superhero but rather by collective action of its mainstream audience. Drawing on the work of Aldo J. Regalado and Andrew Hoberek, I argue that *Joker* provides a critique of neoliberal America in its throwback to the paranoia and alienation that we see in several of Martin Scorsese's postmodern films of the 1970s and 1980s, such as *Taxi Driver* and *King of Comedy*. In so doing, *Joker* depicts the early '80s American city and nation-state as a dystopia, using the fictional city of Gotham as a point-of-comparison between early-Reagan America and Trump's America through what Paul Goodman, in his exploration of post-war advance-guard (*avant-garde*) American literature, has called an occasional "mode. I will show how *Joker* subverts the conventions of the superhero genre in its gesturing towards collective, rather than individualistic, forms of social renewal.

Day 1/Panel 9 – Fighting Oppression

"My how I have walked and worked to get those names": Petitioning and the Women's Suffrage Movement in the Progressive era

Tim Verhoeven, Monash University

This paper examines the role and evolution of collective petitioning in the campaign for the nineteenth amendment. By the early twentieth century, many suffragettes were disillusioned with the petition as a form of political mobilization. Rather than abandon it, however, a new generation of activists reinvented the form. Drawing on personal correspondence as well as organizational records, this paper shows how national leaders such as Carrie Chapman Catt and Alice Paul remade the petition to be a potent tool for garnering political support and public attention.

A close study of suffrage petitioning brings into focus the grassroots campaigning that powered the movement. Furthermore, it shows how a shared commitment to a form of political action could bridge internal divisions. Both the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) and National Woman's Party (NWP) deployed the petition, though in slightly different ways. The barrier of race, however, proved harder to overcome. Finally, the paper considers the suffrage movement within the broader evolution of collective petitioning in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

A Crisis of Character: The Sexual Reputation of American Women and Breaking from the English Law of Slander

Jessica Lake, Australian Catholic University

In the late 18th /early 19th centuries, English common law of slander (the spoken form of defamation) worked to protect the reputations of men in their professions and trades. It deemed sexual slander – such as accusations of adultery, unchastity or prostitution – as 'spiritual' in nature and punishable only in the ecclesiastical courts. But the American colonies, while inheriting English common law, did not create an ecclesiastical jurisdiction, leaving women slandered as 'whores' and shunned by their communities with little, if any, legal redress. The inability of women to vindicate their names became a crisis in the new republic, which placed great emphasis of individual character and morality (as opposed to class) and linked white women's sexual purity directly to national prosperity and political stability. This paper examines the first sexual slander case heard in the United States, *Smith v Minor* in 1790, concerning ruinous allegations that young, unmarried Mary Smith was pregnant. In a revolutionary judgement, Chief Justice Kinsey broke with hundreds of years of establish English precedent to better protect the sexual reputations of women and silence verbal attacks against them. It was the first step in a transnational reform movement known as the 'Slander of Women Acts' that granted women greater reputational rights, at the same as reinforcing chastity as white women's privilege and primary social value.

From Civil Rights to Human Rights: How a small group of American civil rights lawyers began and nearly created another rights revolution

Maria Armoudian, University of Auckland

This political history examines 40 years of inter-branch and civil society construction toward redressing egregious violations of international human rights through US law, courts, and Congress. Using interviews, document analysis, and previous scholarship, the paper begins with how advocates in civil society advanced an improbable pathway to justice in US federal courts for foreigner survivors violated in foreign lands by foreign persons. It turns to Congress, which debated

the ideas and counter-ideas and created new law with hopes of expanding redress globally. Then it returns to the courts and civil society where advocates modified the ideas to develop NGOs and cases that expanded the precedent's reach. However, counter-ideas, which initially lost ground to the human rights ideas, gradually overtook them. This paper sheds light into four phenomena: the power and limitations of aspirational and practical ideas in constructing new pathways to justice; the role of creative advocacy to adjust, refit, and amalgamate ideas, laws and facts to advance redress; the inter-branch interactions with these ideas; and the flow of ideas between civil society and branches of government. This 40-year span necessarily omits some specificity but features highlights within its broad overview.

Day 2/Honouring Shane White: A Remarkable Career in History

In 2021 distinguished historian Shane White retired from the University of Sydney after forty-six years as either a student or scholar in the History Department. Over four decades, White – now Emeritus Professor of History at Sydney – has expanded and enriched our understanding of the gritty texture of African-American life and culture in New York City. Paying special attention to his prize-winning books, this panel will reflect on the arc of White's illustrious career and consider his uniqueness as a historian of everyday Black life. His influence on colleagues and students has been profound. The panel will also include written tributes from eminent scholars in the United States offering valuable insights into the international impact of White's ground-breaking work.

Michael Ondaatje (Chair) is currently Deputy Director of the Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences, and Professor of History, at Australian Catholic University. He is the author of *Black Conservative Intellectuals in Modern America* (University of Pennsylvania Press) and a regular commentator on US politics in the media. He will be taking up the position of Head of School of Humanities, Languages and Social Sciences at Griffith University in January 2022.

Richard Waterhouse is Emeritus Professor of History at the University of Sydney. He was formerly Bicentennial Professor of Australian History and Head of the School of Philosophical and Historical Inquiry at the same institution. Receiving his PhD in American colonial history from Johns Hopkins in 1973 he then took up a lectureship in US history at the University of Sydney. He subsequently developed research interests in Australian cultural history, including the nature of the Australian/US cultural relationship. He is the author of more than 70 chapters/articles and five books, including *Private Pleasures Public Leisure* and *The Vision Splendid*. He is a Fellow both of the Australian Academy of Humanities and the Australian Academy of Social Sciences.

Deirdre O'Connell is a writer, teacher and historian whose work explores the intersection of race, popular culture and modernism in Australia and the United States. She is the author of *The Ballad of Blind Tom* and *Harlem Nights: The Secret History of Australia's Jazz Age*. Previously, she worked in environmental journalism and music documentary.

Nicholas Gebhardt is Professor of Jazz and Popular Music Studies at Birmingham City University in the United Kingdom and Director of the Birmingham Centre for Media and Cultural Research. His work focuses on jazz and popular music in American culture, and his publications include *Going for Jazz: Musical Practices and American Ideology* and *Vaudeville Melodies: Popular Musicians and Mass Entertainment in American Culture, 1870-1929*. He is also the co-editor of *The Cultural Politics of Jazz Collectives*, *The Routledge Companion to Jazz Studies* and the Routledge book series, *Transnational Studies in Jazz*.

Stephen Robertson is a Professor in the Department of History and Art History at George Mason University, where from 2013-2019 he served as executive director of the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media. A historian of the twentieth-century United States, his research focuses on legal history, African-American urban history, the history of sexuality, and digital history. With colleagues at the University of Sydney, he created the award-winning *Digital Harlem*, a research tool that maps the complexity of everyday life in the 1920s. He is currently working on *Harlem in Disorder*, a multi-layered, hyperlinked spatial history of the 1935 Harlem riot, under contract with Stanford University Press.

Sarah C. Dunstan is currently a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow at Queen Mary University London and will be taking up a position as Lecturer in the International History of Modern Human Rights at the University of Glasgow in early 2022. She is author of *Race, Rights and Reform: Black Activists in the French Empire and the United States from World War 1 to Cold War*, recently out with Cambridge University Press. Her work has also appeared in journals such as the *Journal of Modern History*, the *Journal of the History of Ideas*, *Gender and History*, and the *Journal of Contemporary History*.

Day2 /Panel 10 - Race and Civil Rights

Race, Law, and Aluminum: Harris A. Parson and Twenty Years of Workplace Struggle

Caleb Smith, Tulane University

In September of 1967, Harris Alfred Parson filed suit against the Kaiser Aluminum and Chemical Corporation and the Aluminum Workers International Union's Local 225 with charges of racial discrimination at Kaiser's plant in Chalmette, Louisiana. Harris Parson filed suit under Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act which prohibited workplace discrimination. By June of 1984, the *Times-Picayune* reported that Parson successfully sued the Kaiser company in an eighteen-year long struggle. Parson was awarded \$113,000 in backpay. Other African Americans apart of the class action lawsuit received roughly three million dollars in sum. This essay uses the *Parson v. Kaiser* case as a thread in analyzing the development of Title VII law through the climax of deindustrialization. Chronologically, this essay extends Jacquelyn Dowd Hall's "long civil rights" argument further right by challenging narratives that situate the post-1965 sector of the African American freedom struggle as solely dominated by the age of black power. This essay argues that everyday labor activists, like Parson, shaped the law and defined its effectiveness while civil rights lawyers seized on the ambiguities of an initially vague Title VII law. By the time Parson saw victory in Louisiana's Eastern District Court, Kaiser's Chalmette plant was closed due to a global economic downturn. The recession ensured that affirmative action policies would not mature quickly for black workers nationwide.

Race and the Republican Party: Is There a Path to Renewal?

Harry Melkonian, Macquarie University

The Trump-era Republican Party did not originate the process of alienating African American voters, but the process was accelerated. How did the Party of Lincoln come to embrace bigotry and intolerance? This paper examines how Republican Party conservatism and individualism were diverted into accepting outright racism and the Republican penchant for party ideology has resulted in the current state of affairs.

Virtually non-existent in the American South for nearly a century, the Republican Party from its origins until 1964, generally supported civil rights and enjoyed support from African American voters. This traditional support for civil rights was undermined in the bitter nomination fight in 1964 between Arizona conservative Barry Goldwater and New York progressive Governor Nelson Rockefeller. Goldwater's message of keeping the government out of individual lives was seized upon by extremists and white southerners who were looking to bolt the Democratic Party. While Goldwater lost the general election, the old South was now in the Republican Party; and, carefully manipulated by Richard Nixon in 1968, the southern attitude became the national Republican ideology.

This paper argues that while the Democrats have had a capacity to maintain coalitions that included Southerners, the Republicans are unable to do so. The GOP failure to accommodate voters without sacrificing essential principles is a reflection that the GOP is far more ideological than the Democrats. While President Reagan welcomed a Republican 'Big Tent', that has proven elusive. As the US relies on a rigid two-party system, to have one of the parties ideologically tied to racism bodes ill for the health of the nation and hinders American renewal.

Civil Rights, Gun Rights: The Armed Backlash Against the Civil Rights Movement

Daniel Fleming, Macquarie University

Following the 2020 murder of George Floyd, Black Lives Matter protests proliferated across the US. Linking racial stereotypes to a "need" for guns to control Black Americans, President Trump, tweeted: "When the looting starts, the shooting starts." Trump not only echoed the 1967 Miami police chief, Walter Headley, he supported the NRA's fight against gun control. The NRA frequently champions white-dominated armed protests, a markedly different stance to its response to the Black Panthers' 1967-armed occupation of California's Capitol. This contradiction prompts the question: To what extent is racism central to the rise in gun ownership and violence since the 1960s?

Scholars differ on the degree to which racism inhibits gun control. Goss argued that racism led to support for gun control, as whites sought to disarm African Americans. Haag argues that gun capitalists sell to anyone regardless of race. Carol Anderson argues that fears of slave revolts led to the Second Amendment, which has never allowed African Americans equal gun ownership rights. Based on American Nazi Party documents, this paper argues that since the early 1960s, racism has spurred a rise in gun ownership and a continuing epidemic of US gun violence.

What is the civil rights movement?

John A. Kirk, University of Arkansas at Little Rock

Historians' responses to successive crises in race relations in the United States have renewed our understanding of the civil rights movement. This paper analyses the major changes in civil rights historiography over the past fifty years, examining how they have shaped the past, present, and future of civil rights studies. The first movement histories were biographies of Martin Luther King Jr. They reinforced the idea that Martin was the movement, and that the movement was Martin. During the 1980s, a second wave of civil rights histories emerged. Focused on grassroots community mobilization from the "bottom-up," rather than a "top-down" leadership model, they radically altered our understanding

of the civil rights movement. The locus of such studies shifted from the national level to the local level, and the chronology of the movement expanded beyond the 1950s and 1960s to create a “long” civil rights movement that charted developments in the decades before and after King’s movement leadership. In recent decades, a third wave of civil rights scholarship has emerged, creating a “wide” civil rights movement that explores topics and themes that reach beyond more traditional areas of study to examine issues including class, gender, sexuality, and other intersectional concerns.

Day2/Panel 11 - Cold War Culture

The Ugly American: A History

Brendon O’Connor, University of Sydney

The first widely recognised use of the label “Ugly American” was the name given to a Constantino Arias photo of a bare-chested middle-aged American male tourist in pre-Castro Cuba, wearing swimming trunks, holding a bottle of whiskey in one hand and a bottle of beer in the other, while smoking a cigar. The tourist looked like the Rodney Dangerfield of his day. In the early-to-mid twentieth century Americans more than any nationality had the money to go abroad as tourists. Henry Luce in his famous 1941 essay pronouncing the “American Century” claimed that the “Americans - Midwestern Americans - are today the least provincial people in the world. They have traveled the most and they know more about the world than the people of any other country.” This was a minority viewpoint. Touring Americans were often remembered by non-Americans as being loud, ignorant and ugly. A standard cartoon image emerged of Americans abroad: they were men in Hawaiian shirts with Kodak cameras bouncing off their rotund stomachs. These men were often accompanied by women with extravagantly big hairdos. The Ugly American caricature was not just the satirizing of a cultural style (or lack thereof) it was also a political critique of the attitude of Americans towards the rest of the world. The 1958 best-selling novel *The Ugly American* situated its insular American characters in South East Asia. These Americans lacked cultural or historical knowledge of the land they believed they could transform and save, including an American ambassador that makes an art of mangling local names. These are of course powerful, and arguably respectable, stereotypes that persist because of the not too distant memories of America’s 45th president. This paper will interrogate these stereotypes, using the mid-twentieth century as the launching pad for a broad ranging history of the notion of the Ugly American.

The Quiet American Film Adaptations and the Melancholia Therein

Scarlette Nhi Do, The Australian National University

No texts prophesied American failure in the Vietnam War more poignantly than Graham Greene’s *The Quiet American* (1955). Joseph Mankiewicz’ 1958 unfaithful adaptation of the novel is well-documented in both film criticism and screen studies alike, with much of the literature making note of the film’s inversion of Greene’s initial critiques. Where Greene condemns American naivete for intervening with a country it knows little about, Mankiewicz treats the intervention as a necessary act of selfless heroism. Few connections have been drawn between these texts and Philip Noyce’s film adaptation (2002), and what it says about the American psyche post-Vietnam War. As a comparative analysis of how the two films adapted Greene’s novel, my paper seeks to elucidate the significance of Noyce’s adaptation, especially considering the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Using Sigmund Freud’s theory on melancholia, I argue that the quiet American in Mankiewicz’ film is the culmination of a desired American identity, which is then portrayed as lost in Noyce’s version, but its retrieval is nevertheless suggested. Understanding how national identity forms through melancholia helps us to ultimately grapple with how the legacy of the Vietnam crisis may be renewed to justify future imperial interventions elsewhere.

Sputnik I and Crisis at the Dawn of the Space Age

Tom Wilkinson, Auckland University

In 1957, the Soviet Union successfully launched the world’s first artificial satellite – *Sputnik I*. Among American commentators and political figures, the Soviet satellite appeared to trigger a crisis of confidence. Historians often recognise this moment as the ‘Sputnik crisis’. The United States, shocked by Soviet success, undertook a variety of initiatives to dispel public anxiety and improve national capabilities, culminating in the creation of NASA, the passage of the National Defense Education Act, and more. However, this narrative usually relies on the notion that post-Sputnik America was firmly in the grips of crisis.

Popular print media of the time reveals that the American response to Sputnik was much more varied. Many Americans pushed back against the notion of a crisis, contending that the Soviet success was an event to be celebrated rather than feared. Some even decried it as a non-event when compared to contemporary concerns. Where public discourse did reflect this heightened sense of ‘crisis’, the reasons often varied, with no clear consensus emerging. These varied

American responses to *Sputnik I* reveal the limits of this 'crisis narrative' and invite us to reconsider wider perceptions of the opening moments of the Space Age.

The Steel Helmet: Black America and Hollywood's Korean War

Chris Dixon, Macquarie University; Jessica Johnson, Macquarie University

The Korean War (1950-1953) remains an obscure and overshadowed conflict in American history. Dubbed a "police action" by President Harry Truman, the Korean War represented neither the glory and clear objectives of World War II which preceded it, nor the upheaval of the Vietnam War which followed. Consequently, the Korean War – and its soldiers and veterans - have not received the same cultural attention as other United States conflicts. Yet, despite that lack of attention, the Korean War was enormously significant, not least because it was the first conflict fought by an integrated American fighting force. For the first time, black and white soldiers ate, slept and fought side by side. Korean War films of the 1950s and 1960s captured this new dynamic and shaped the experience for American audiences within the context of an expanding civil rights movement. While Korean War soldiers were rarely acknowledged due to the nature of their conflict, black soldiers suffered doubly because of their skin color. This paper aims to correct this historical and cultural neglect by exploring the representations of black soldiers in Korea War films of the 1950s and 1960s, including the *The Steel Helmet* (1951), *Porkchop Hill* (1959) and *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962).

Day2/ Panel 12 American Literature

Reading Early American Utopia Today

Hannah Lauren Murray, University of Liverpool

This paper examines the first utopian fiction written in the US. Set in the proto-communist and proto-feminist Lithconia, *Equality* (1802) offers readers a world without gender inequality, financial property, class hierarchy, or slavery. Whilst existing criticism reads the text in its context of 1790s radicalism, this paper considers what it means to read about a future that has yet to pass during a time of global crisis, nearly 220 years after it was originally imagined. *Equality's* narrative of radical change not only helps us to understand today's headlines as part of a history of inequality but also asks us to imagine moving beyond them.

As a nation that may exist at "some time or other", Lithconia occupies its own temporality as a possible future America. Its alternative 1802 leads us to ask when and how this improvement can occur; furthermore, I argue that as a text written during early US colonisation and settler-colonialism it leads us to ask who this future is for. Reading utopian writing provides a blueprint of the future: it is up to readers to bridge the gap between the present and the future yet to pass, whether that future is written two centuries ago or today.

Individual Paper: 'Renewing the Short Story During the American Rental Crisis, 1973–1993'

Nina Ellis, University of Cambridge

The oil crisis of 1973 pitched the United States into its 'Crisis Decades' (1). The golden age of homeownership ended abruptly, and economic crisis led to personal crisis as many Americans were forced into insecure short-term leases. In Lucia Berlin's short story 'Noël, 1974' (1984), a tenant struggles to fit her family into her house: 'the landlord thinks I only have two sons,' so 'when he comes one of them has to disappear' (2). My interdisciplinary paper proposes that the instability of the American real estate market gave rise to a new genre in the 1970s and 1980s, which I call 'tenant fiction' — a literary renewal which emerged from a crisis.

Homeownership became integral to the 'American Dream' with the 1944 Home Loan Program, but tenant fiction reveals a transience fundamental to many Americans' experiences of 'home'. I focus on Berlin and Raymond Carver, whose renewals of the short form replicate housing inequalities: like tenants moving house, they start again with each new story, choosing what to include and what to exclude, what to bring with them and what to leave behind. My paper explores the features of tenant fiction in relation to the rental crises experienced by their protagonists.

How Whiteness Claimed the Future. The Always New Vs. the Always Now in US-American Literature

Dr. Mariya Nikolova, Universität Potsdam & Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

My dissertation examined how major avant-garde tropes promote the potential of permanent renewal as white America's (re)birth and transformation. Renewal, in its broadest sense, ties to the capacities to create, progress, transcend, and simply be. From Black critique we know that, within dominant discourse, all these capacities have been stifled and denied to Black bodies ever since colonization. On the one hand, Black creative work and origin/ality have been fetishized, appropriated, stolen, and dismissed in and by dominant culture. On the other hand, Black being has been construed as negativity and barred on the level of ontology (Fanon, Wilderson, Warren). It follows then that racialization operates on multiple levels in the conceptual frame of renewal. I studied this conceptualization by re-reading the works of and literary criticism on Kathy Acker, Don DeLillo and Marilynne Robinson. More specifically, I examined how images of renewal enable the claim on futurity, transformative potential, and movement forward as

exclusively white properties. Premised on oppositions between positive capacities and a state of complete incapacitation, these images are often viewed as separate constructions. With my PhD project, I showed that, deriving from white ideology, such representations are symbiotic and simultaneous. The “good” story of white renewal is inextricably linked to narrative and textual transgressions towards Blackness and Black being. I studied these transgressions and the ways white literature alibies them out, and instead pushes forward an image of white morality, success, and heroism. I considered how tenets of whiteness – like the programmatic quest towards renewal – function on narrative and discursive level. For instance, I showed that an avant-gardism embedded in whiteness positions white texts as ground-breaking and transformative despite the lack of formal or conceptual innovation. Similarly, techniques such as textual deferral, omissions, and incorporation bar or defuse the critique which exposes the racist premises and anti-Black workings of white fiction. The project thus examined what kind of images/imagination this literature has promoted with the effect of strengthening the racialized division of American culture.

Monstrous Ecologies: Reconfiguring ‘Human’ in Jeff VanderMeer’s *Southern Reach* Trilogy

Toyah Webb, University of Sydney

Written after the BP Gulf Oil Spill, Jeff VanderMeer’s *Southern Reach* trilogy traces the shadowy outline of Area X, a stretch of coast in the United States. Created by a mysterious ‘event’ thirty years earlier, the official explanation is an ecological disaster. While it becomes clear that the reality is much ‘weirder’ than this, my paper will investigate what ‘misreading’ Area X as an ecological disaster might reveal about our own times of ecocrises and global pandemics. *Annihilation* (the first novel in the trilogy) follows the twelfth expedition into Area X. The novel’s unnamed narrator is a biologist, tasked with studying environmental irregularities. However, soon she begins manifesting strange symptoms of her own. Inspired by the critical writing of Stacy Alaimo, Nancy Tuana and Alison Sperling, I will ‘misread’ the biologist’s reaction to Area X as a type of ‘eco-sickness’. Evident in high cancer rates and respiratory conditions linked to air-pollution, eco-sickness reveals how humans are co-constituted by their environments. By emphasizing the porosity of our bodies, VanderMeer’s trilogy thus asks what it means to ‘be human’ in the Anthropocene.

Day2/ Panel 13 Legacies of War

The American Freedmen’s Inquiry Commission

Frances M. Clarke, University of Sydney

The Civil War posed an existential threat to the U.S., foreshadowing the destruction of the Union. Enslaved people confronted a crisis of their own, as they fled *en masse* only to end up in hastily constructed contraband camps facing overcrowding, starvation, and rampant disease. Midway through the war, as emancipation became a U.S. war goal, the War Department finally set up the American Freedmen’s Inquiry Commission (AFIC) to deal with suffering freedpeople and recommend ways to transform them into wage laborers. The three anti-slavery Republicans who headed the AFIC were committed philanthropists. They would spend months sending out questionnaires, conducting fieldwork across the U.S. and Canada, and reading up on the aftermath of emancipations elsewhere, finally producing a lengthy report. Their recommendations had far-reaching consequences, generating what one scholar calls “a blueprint for radical Reconstruction.” At the same time, they foreclosed possibilities, such as property redistribution, land reform, or compensation for freedmen and women. My paper will examine at the work of the AFIC—their survey methods, historical analogies, reports, and social context—comparing their recommendations to the demands of the formerly enslaved and the White and Black women abolitionists who worked alongside them. Firmly shutting the door on future deliberations over what the nation owed to freedpeople, rather than the reverse, the AFIC set the terms for postwar debates in ways that continue to resonate.

The Plumb Plan and the 1919 Moment

Paul Michel Taillon, University of Auckland

Historians have dismissed and contemporary observers did spurn the Plumb Plan as either hopelessly utopian, repulsively Bolshevik, or venally self-interested on the part its railroad union sponsors. This paper takes another look at the Plumb Plan—the labor movement’s 1919 proposal for permanent government control of the United States’ railroad system after the First World War—judging not how plausible was its vision and as something more than simply a demonstration of group self-interest. Instead, it considers the proposal as constitutive of a new, alternative political economy with government-operated railroads at its center. Understood in the context of its creation—the year 1919, a transitional, liminal year full of possibility worldwide—the Plumb Plan takes on clarity and meaning as an expression of constitutive politics. The 1919 moment, when the cataclysm of world war had thrown the seemingly routine and orthodox into the air and up for scrutiny, opened a door for political outsiders to present new, indeed novel, public policy. In 1919, a year of crisis and opportunity, Americans—railroaders particularly—understood the stakes for national reconstruction, asked constitutive questions about the railroads’ governance, and put forward programmatic policy aiming at nothing less than the nation’s renewal.

No place for old men: The Middle-aged Soldier Misses Home

Troy Rule, University of Western Australia

This paper aims to identify how a citizen-soldier's social location, experience and identity, shaped his experience in the United States Army (US Army) during World War II. Ralph Samuel Jaffe was a thirty-seven-year-old, Jewish hardware store owner from Rhode Island. He faced the challenges of being away from his family, along with the difficulty of gruelling training on an aging body. Quiet, unassuming, but deeply intelligent and empathetic, Jaffe became a respected elder within his unit. His correspondence to his wife, however, shows a desperately lonely man who was appalled at the ineptitude and inefficiencies of the Army, and relied heavily on the emotional support of an already overburdened partner. This case study explores the themes of body consciousness, gender roles and relations, different masculinities, and the shaky indoctrination of mature males into military culture. The study is underpinned by the theories of Erving Goffman, Michel Foucault, and Judith Butler. It examines the degree to which the US Army resembled Goffman's total institution and how this affected Jaffe's experiences. It employs Foucault's theory on power to draw out how Jaffe experienced and negotiated power, while Butler's work is used to examine how Jaffe's behaviour produced his gender within the army.

The Dangers of Bad Precedent: The Exclusion and Incarceration of Japanese Americans

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In the aftermath of the attack on Pearl Harbor persons of Japanese ancestry became the victims of racial prejudice, scapegoated for the unprovoked attack by the Empire of Japan. This war hysteria was a clear continuation of the previous anti-Japanese sentiments, the fear of the "yellow peril". Japanese Americans were designated as "enemy aliens" and were subjected to forced mass exclusion and incarceration in accordance with Executive Order No. 9066 issued by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The wartime treatment of Japanese persons was seen as a military necessity, with Congress and the Supreme Court in full support of the Roosevelt Administration's effort to wage war successfully. The proposed paper intends to examine the wartime treatment of Japanese Americans from the perspective of its historical precedent, the contemporary interpretation of Japanese 'internment' by the Trump Administration. The topic is of great significance in light of President-elect Donald J. Trump's statement from December of 2015 in which he declared that the 'internment' of Japanese Americans had legal and political precedent, a precedent later cited in support of his Administration's anti-immigrant policies, the Muslim travel ban and the detention of migrants.

