

*Amerikanistendag 2016*

**Conference Program**



**10 June 2016**

**Vrije Universiteit**

**Amsterdam**

## **Program**

- 10.00 AM           **Registration** (12th floor)
- 10.30 AM           **Welcome** (12A-00)  
Prof.dr. Diederik Oostdijk
- 10.40 AM           **Keynote lecture** (12A-00)  
Dr. Erin La Cour  
“From Comix to the ‘Graphic Novel’: The Politics of American Comics”
- 11.30 AM           **Coffee break** (12th floor)
- 12.00 PM           **First round of parallel sessions**

### **Session 1: Gender and Sexuality** (10A-36)

Chair: Dr. Sara Polak

- Annelot Prins, “Performing Feminisms: A Case Study of Beyoncé”
- Mona Raesian, “Funny Femininity: Representation of Women in American Comedy TV Series”
- Amber Witsenburg, “‘You Freud, Me Jane?’: The Representation of Trauma and Sexual Identity in Hitchcock’s *Marnie*”

### **Session 2: Specters of Marx** (05A-36)

Chair: Dr. George Blaustein

- Heleen Blommers, “The War on Poverty, New Deal, and Female-Headed Families: Tracing the Culture of Poverty Theory Back to the 1930s”

- Genesee Powell, “Neoliberal Economic Globalization: What’s In It for the American Working Class?”
- Maarten Arnoldus, “Denormalizing the Present: Considering the Value of Representations of Cultural Critique in *Mr. Robot*”

### **Session 3: The Politics of Commemoration**

(05A-37)

Chair: Amrita Das MA

- Janneke 't Hart, “The Orgy of Feeling at Work in Amy Waldman’s *The Submission*”
- Constantijn Smith, “*Titanic* Memories: Longing for Closure and Identification with an Other”

#### **1.00 PM Lunch break**

Participants buy their own lunch in VU cafeteria

#### **2.00 PM Second round of parallel sessions**

### **Session 4: African American Music (12A-37)**

Chair: Prof.dr. Frank Mehring

- Anne Wester, “Civil Religion in African American Mourning Songs about John F. Kennedy”
- Nathaniel Mason, “Sun Ra’s Post-Ethnic Abandon”
- Eleonora Sereni, “Beyond the Blues Woman: A Womanist Model of Liberation – Shug Avery in *The Color Purple*”

**Session 5: Crossing Boundaries, Creating Identities (11A-37)**

Chair: Dr. Marietta Messmer

- Renee de Groot, “In Praise of Southernness: Ford Madox Ford’s Great Trade Route and the Southern Agrarians’ ‘I’ll Take My Stand””
- Cynthia van der Heyden, “Raza Si! Hanigan No! Chicano Resistance to Racial Oppression During the Hanigan Case, 1976-1981”
- Donata Koekkoek, “US Cultural Diplomacy in Gulf Education: From Dichotomy to Dialectic”

**Session 6: Transatlantic Connections (11A-36)**

Chair: Prof.dr. Diederik Oostdijk

- Lonneke Geerlings, “African American Issues on Dutch Television: Rosey E. Pool and Gordon Heath in the TV Play *Advocaat Pro Deo* (1958)”
- Joost Baarsen, “‘It’s a hellhole’: Anti-Europeanisms in Twenty-First-Century American Culture”

3.00 PM **Coffee break** (12th floor)

3.30 PM **Third round of parallel sessions**

**Session 7: Self-Fashioning in Autobiography and Fiction (12A-37)**

Chair: Dr. Babs Boter

- Jawek Kamstra, “Becoming Obama: Self-Fashioning a President”

- Sofia Fytopoulou, “Surrogate families’ and the Lingering Force of Patriarchy in Charles Johnson’s *Middle Passage*”
- Diana Wagner, “‘Monsters at home’: Maskings in Siri Hustvedt’s Novels”

### **Session 8: Reframing American History (11A-37)**

Chair: Dr. Maarten Zwiers

- Tim de Wit, “The Racialization of Pontiac: A Comparison of Robert Rogers’ and Francis Parkman’s Works on the Pontiac War of 1763-1764”
- Carleen Hardin, “Combating Nativism: Irish Assimilation in Nineteenth-Century America”
- Janne Heling, “American Folklore: What Might Have Been”

### **Session 9: America in Words and Pictures (11-A36)**

Chair: Dr. Jaap Kooijman

- Jon Van Zytveld, “Conditioning and Complicity: Adapting *American Psycho*’s Unreliable Narrator”
- Oliver Taenzer, “Ekphrasis and Prose: On Henry Miller’s *The Air-Conditioned Nightmare*”
- Shannon Maher, “Baz Luhrmann Reaching for the Green Light: A Comparative Analysis of *The Great Gatsby* Novel and Film”

4.30 PM **Drinks** (12th floor)

## Keynote Address

### “From Comix to the ‘Graphic Novel’: The Politics of American Comics”

This talk will trace the birth—and mainstream success—of “graphic novels” in America to their origins in the underground alternative Comix movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Pushing back against the established censorship of comics instigated by Frederic Wertham’s influential *Seduction of the Innocent* (1954) and the subsequent Comics Code Authority, members of the Comix movement wore their adopted “X”—pointing to the American rating system for explicit material—as a badge of courage and subversion. Their often salacious works were not only meant to shock however, but to pointedly, and often humorously, comment on the sociopolitical issues gaining momentum in America at the time, including sexual, gender, racial, and anti-war politics. As counterparts to “approved” comics, comix took to task the normative morality outlined in the code and upheld by popular works, such as mass-market superhero comics in which “good” always won over “evil,” to show a more nuanced, radical, and liberated view of contemporary issues. As Charles Hatfield (2005) notes, comix “gave rise to the idea of comics as an acutely personal means of artistic exploration and self-expression.” Indeed, these exact qualifiers are at the heart of the term “graphic novel,” which at once appeals to a wider audience as “comics for adults” and to university scholars as novelesque works suitable for academic study. But can “graphic novels,” such as Art Spiegelman’s *Maus* (1980-1991), Phoebe Gloekner’s *Diary of a Teenage Girl* (2002), or Alison Bechdel’s *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* (2006), be seen as underlining and continuing the impetus of the Comix movement—or does the term itself undermine the entire discourse?

## Biography



Erin La Cour is a Lecturer in Creative Writing at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and in Comparative Literature at Utrecht University. She holds a PhD from the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis, with a thesis entitled “The ‘Graphic Novel’: Discourses on the Archive” (2013). She is the co-founder of Amsterdam Comics, a member of the Nordic Network for Comics Research, former editor of the open-access online comics journal *Scandinavian Journal of Comic Art*, and acted as project advisor for the sequential art exhibition “Black or White” at the Van Abbemuseum (2013). Her current research focuses on the aesthetics of narrative and space in comics, especially in the context of modern art, postcolonial, and gender discourse. Her most recent publications include the anthology *Comics and Power: Representing and Questioning Culture, Subjects, and Communities* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing 2015), a guest-edited issue of *Image [e&] Narrative*: “Comics in Art/Art in Comics” (2016), and several forthcoming articles, including “Social Abstraction: Toward Exhibiting Comics as Comics” (UP Liège), “Comics as Minor Literature” (*Image [e&] Narrative* 2016), “Reading Alison Bechdel’s ‘Dykes to Watch Out For’” (De Gruyter 2017), and “*Quaco*: Postcolonial Voices from the Dutch Slave Trade” (Routledge 2017).

## **Session 1: Visual Representations of Gender and Sexuality**

Venue: 10A-36

Chair: Dr. Sara Polak

### **Annelot Prins. *Performing Feminisms: A Case Study of Beyoncé***

Beyoncé Knowles-Carter's career as iconic musician has been expanding for over two decades, and the demise of her popularity is nowhere in sight yet. Grounded in the field of celebrity studies and analysed through an intersectional lens, this paper untangles some of the discourses in Beyoncé's feminist identity. I claim that Beyoncé not merely displays the tension within her own star text, but also the tension within the (post-)feminist debate in American society. The contradictory discourses that circulate through Beyoncé's star text tell us something about the state of feminism today.

Annelot Prins is a graduate student in both Literary Studies and Comparative Cultural Analysis at the University of Amsterdam.

### **Mona Raesian. *Funny Femininity: Representation of Women in American Comedy TV Series***

Family comedies such as *Father Knows Best*, *the Cosby Show*, *Full House* and many others have always been a popular fixture of American TV. Having broader viewer-ship than most other types of programming, they are presumed to provide good, clean family fun. It is therefore relevant to state that they can significantly influence gender identities. This article aims to map out the way the placement of women in various recurrent pairings (sisters, mothers-daughters, etc.)- exemplified in three American sitcoms (*Modern family*, *The Middle*, *Yes Dear!*)- contributes to the construction of a female gender identity that is constantly critical of itself.

Mona Raesian is a PhD student at Philipps-Universität Marburg.



**Amber Witsenburg. "You Freud, Me Jane?" *The Representation of Trauma and Sexual Identity in Hitchcock's Marnie***

The title character of Hitchcock's film *Marnie* (1964) has previously been interpreted as a repressed heterosexual or a closeted lesbian. However, as I will argue, it is more logical to read her as asexual. Interpreting her character as such, it becomes clear that the film presents a discursive framework based on compulsory sexuality. Most notably, Marnie's lack of interest in sex is seen as a symptom of a childhood trauma, rather than as a sexual orientation in itself. I will therefore explore how the film links asexuality to trauma by means of the concept of repression, and thus deconstruct compulsory sexuality as the film presents it.

Amber Witsenburg is a Research Master student of Literary Studies at VU University Amsterdam

---

**Session 2: Specters of Marx**

Venue: 5A-36

Chair: Dr. George Blaustein

**Heleen Blommers. *The War on Poverty, New Deal, and Female-Headed Families: Tracing the Culture of Poverty Theory Back to the 1930s***

In 1964 Johnson declared the War on Poverty. At the base of his main strategy to confront poverty laid the culture of poverty theory, which argued that someone was poor due to individual weaknesses such as a lack of skills, education, or motivation. Some historians even argue that such thinking eventually led to the failure of the War on Poverty. In this paper I will analyze whether similar thoughts were already present in the 1930s and how this could have influenced New Deal policies. I will specifically focus on ideas about the relation between female-headed families and poverty.

Heleen Blommers is a Research Master student of History at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

**Genesee Powell. *Neoliberal Economic Globalization: What's In It for the American Working Class?***

This paper examines how the neoliberal policy platforms introduced under the Reagan Administration shaped the manner in which globalization impacted the working class. The time period for this study, which is from 1980 onward, includes the rapid acceleration of globalization, inequality and technological advancement following the neoliberal revolution. I analyze these developments using data collected from economic censuses and independent studies on economic mobility, working conditions, and wage levels among the working class. This paper challenges the perception that globalization is a neutral process that benefits all of society.

Genesee Powell is a BA student of American Studies at the University of Groningen.

**Maarten Arnoldus. *Denormalizing the Present: Considering the Value of Representations of Cultural Critique in Mr. Robot***

This paper assesses and describes popular culture's capacity to denormalize neoliberal structures of oppression. The inclusion of complex critiques of capitalist realism in mass media products like *Mr. Robot* suggests that there is value in the way abstract ideas about structural subjugation are represented in works of fiction. The argument focuses on showing how these theories are represented, and if and how they inform audiences about the way that society is structured. Reception is included through the symptomatic analyzing of so-called 'recaps': short form opinion pieces written by amateur critics and posted, often directly after each episode airs, to online blogs.

Maarten Arnoldus is an MA student of American Studies at the University of Groningen

---

### **Session 3: The Politics of Commemoration**

Venue: 5A-37

Chair: Amrita Das MA

#### **Janneke 't Hart. *The Orgy of Feeling at Work in Amy Waldman's The Submission*.**

Melodrama is a powerful political discourse that was mobilised to both validate (violent) state actions embraced by U.S. politics and media in the aftermath of 9/11, and shape the public experience of the events. In my paper I explore the political and media dynamic in Amy Waldman's *The Submission* (2011) as a melodramatic "orgy of feeling": a process in which traumatic emotions are relocated and enhanced to produce a stronger sense of victimisation. I argue Waldman employs and ridicules melodrama to criticise both mainstream culture and anti-intellectualist politics and media, and in doing so, contributes to a counter-narrative to 9/11 melodrama.

Janneke 't Hart MA is a graduate of Leiden University, Literary Studies, Specialisation English Literature and Culture.

#### **Constantijn Smith. *Titanic Memories: Longing for Closure and Identification with an Other***

Although the *RMS Titanic* sank over a century ago, it remains firmly anchored as an unmasterable past that reverberates in the present. This paper explores how *Titanic's* continued public presence signifies both a fundamental human need for closure and a longing to identify with an Other who has since disappeared, as well as to retrieve an inaccessible referent through representation, recreated spaces, and a fetish for the absent (body). The discovery of *Titanic's* wreck in the 1980s coincided with an acceleration in temporal sensibility that urged spectators to memorialize and not forget. Yet, for *Titanic*, bodies are missing, images are missing, and the ship is largely inaccessible. Consequently, the desire to fill these "gaps" is so strong that this has resulted in constant memory exercises (from cinematic representations to diving

expeditions) that seek to demonstrate *Titanic's* significance and uncover material and immaterial traces of the trauma. Furthermore, this longing to identify with those who have disappeared has also resulted in a spatial fetishism that relies on a conflation of (mediated) memory and imagination. All of this reminds us – a generation of so-called post-witnesses – that *Titanic* sank, but still exists, thereby perpetuating a collective inability for closure.

Constantijn Smith is a PhD student and instructor of American Studies at the University of Groningen

---

#### **Session 4: African American Music**

Venue: 12A-37

Chair: Prof. Dr. Frank Mehring

***Anne Wester. Civil Religion in African American Mourning Songs about John F. Kennedy.***

This paper focuses on a selection of African American songs about the death of John F. Kennedy. It concentrates on the question how African American artists express civil religious ideas in relation to the efforts and accomplishments of the Kennedy Administration, the comparisons that are made between Biblical figures and the slain president, and the manner in which these artists express civil religion when discussing the future of the United States after the death of the President. It thereby not only zooms in on the African American musical and cultural heritage but also on the role of Christianity in 1960s America.

Anne Wester is a BA student of English Language and Culture at Utrecht University.

**Nathaniel Mason. *Sun Ra's Post-Ethnic Abandon***

As we drift further into an era of modern transnationalism new ways of thinking about race/ethnicity rise concurrently. How then can new formations of ethnicity, hastened by globalization and transnationalism, be explored through Jazz? Based upon my MA thesis, I will explore how the theory of postethnicity is evident in the life and work of Sun Ra, who offers a vast body of work to explore. I identify how Ra embodies a “post-ethnic abandon” of Earth-bound racial constructs, as he seeks to form a new path for society based on the utopian potentials offered by a techno-centric vision of outer-space.

Nathaniel Mason is an MA graduate of North American Studies, Radboud University Nijmegen

**Eleonora Sereni. *Beyond the Blues Woman: A Womanist Model of Liberation—Shug Avery in The Color Purple***

Shug Avery, from Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*, is a fascinating figure: an embodiment of female empowerment through economic and sexual liberation, the sassy blues singer *shimmies* her way into the novel challenging the established gender norms and patriarchal institutions.

Starting with a brief overview on blues music and women's role in the genre, followed by a consideration of selected lyrics from classic blues performers Ma Rainey and Bessie Smith's songs, this paper aims to illustrate how fictional blues singer Shug Avery not only epitomizes the blues women's tradition, but also moves beyond it as Walker's womanist model of liberation.

Eleonora Sereni is an MA student in British and North American Cultural Studies at Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg.

## **Session 5: Crossing Boundaries, Creating Identities**

Venue: 11A-37

Chair: Dr. Marietta Messmer

### **Renee de Groot. *In Praise of Southernness: Ford Madox Ford's Great Trade Route and the Southern Agrarians' I'll Take My Stand***

In 1938, Ford Madox Ford followed the "great trade route" from Europe to the American South, and effectively *took his stand* with the Southern Agrarians. He shared their resistance to industrialism, and fit their Lost Cause into his grand theory of history. Ford and the Southern Agrarians saw 'the South' as not just a geographical location but a state of mind. Their transatlantic philosophy of Southernness underlies the meaning they ascribed to 'the South' for the history and future of the world. This paper compares the worldviews and political ideologies of Ford's writings on America with the polemics of *I'll Take My Stand*.

Renee de Groot is an MA student in American Studies at the University of Amsterdam.

### **Cynthia van der Heyden. *Raza Sil Hanigan Nol Chicano Resistance to Racial Oppression During the Hanigan Case, 1976–1981***

In 1976, three white ranchers tortured three Mexican immigrants crossing the border into Douglas, Arizona. The Hanigan Case, named for the implicated ranchers, raises a set of complex questions about citizenship, immigration, and race. More specifically, it illuminates the struggle over the status and the rights of undocumented immigrants in the United States. For the following five years, Chicano activists staged local, regional and national protests to pressure the U.S. Justice Department to file charges against the Hanigans. They negotiated both

civil and human rights standards to combat the discrimination and abuse directed at ethnic Mexicans along the U.S.-Mexico border.

Cynthia Van Der Heyden is a recent American Studies graduate at the University of Groningen

**Donata Koekkoek. *US Cultural Diplomacy in Gulf Education: from Dichotomy to Dialectic***

This essay examines in what way the successes and conflicts of Americanization and Arabization at the American branch campuses of NYU, Carnegie Mellon and Northwestern University in the Persian Gulf showcase the possibilities and limitations of US cultural-transfer and diplomacy in Gulf education in the 21st-century. Ultimately, this paper will argue that these branch campuses resemble a dichotomy between the cultures, rather than the aspired dialectic. In the (authoritarian) Gulf, the power dynamics are inverted and there is particularly much agency on the Arab receiving end in appropriating US culture, leading to conflict. US cultural diplomacy should therefore become more hybrid and open.

Donata Koekkoek is an MA student of American Studies at Utrecht University

---

**Session 6. Transatlantic Connections**

Venue: 11A-36

Chair: Prof. Dr. Diederik Oostdijk

**Lonneke Geerlings. *African American Issues on Dutch Television. Rosey E.Pool and Gordon Heath in the TV Play Advocaat Pro Deo (1958)***

When the African American actor Gordon Heath (1918-1991) met the Dutch Rosey E. Pool (1905-1971) after a performance in a London theatre in 1947, little did he expect to meet an expert in African

American literature and culture. They immediately became friends *and* co-workers. Their joint performances, both in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, were important events in the ‘claiming of voice’ (bell hooks 1995) of African Americans abroad. This paper will discuss Pool’s and Heath’s 1958 performance on Dutch television with a play that addressed the American ‘black issue’. Pool had translated the play and taught Heath Dutch for the occasion.

Lonneke Geerlings is a PhD candidate in History at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

**Joost Baarssen. *“It’s a Hellhole”*: Anti-Europeanisms in Twenty-First-Century American Culture**

In this paper, I seek to investigate whether there are specific narrative structures in American culture in which anti-Europeanisms find a fruitful soil. Concentrating on the uses of Europe in modern-day jeremiads, the concept of loss aversion, and the fear of “Europeanization,” is there anything we can say about how anti-Europeanisms materialize? Why is it that, notwithstanding the diminishing role of Europe in the world, the idea of Europe continues to have political clout and utility value in American conversations about themselves? What is the role of anti-Europeanisms in performing Americanness?

G.H. Joost Baarssen is a Ph.D. student in Transatlantic American Studies at the RuhrCenter of American Studies, TU Dortmund University, Germany.

---

**Session 7: Self-Fashioning in Autobiography and Fiction**

Venue: 12A-37

Chair: Dr. Babs Boter



**Jawek Kamstra. *Becoming Obama: Self-Fashioning in Dreams from My Father and The Audacity of Hope***

In my paper, I will apply Stephen Greenblatt's notion of self-fashioning to Barack Obama's *Dreams From My Father* (1995) and *The Audacity of Hope* (2006) in order to assess how these two egodocuments contributed to the political persona he created. My overarching argument is that, retrospectively, the more personal *Dreams From My Father* was a necessary step for Obama to establish himself as Presidential material. Obama needed to frame and fashion his idiosyncratic story – son of an African immigrant father and lower-middle class Midwestern mother – as typically American before he could present himself as a Presidential candidate, to the American audience and to himself.

Jawek Kamstra is a BA student of Literatures in English at the VU.

**Sofia Fytopolou. “*Surrogate Families*” and the Lingering Force of Patriarchy in Charles Johnson's *Middle Passage***

The re-evaluation of the contribution of the black community by prominent historians such as John Blassingame significantly influenced the works of African American writers in the 1970s and 1980s, who used black communities and black empowerment as central themes in many of their novels. In particular, African American writers such as Octavia Butler, Toni Morrison, and Charles Johnson have drawn heavily on nineteenth-century slave narratives to explore gender and racial constructions of black identity. This essay will primarily be concerned with Charles Johnson's novel *Middle Passage* (1990) and his allegorical approach towards the decisive role of slaves' communities in providing a collective sense of black identity that countered the racial and gender stereotypes imposed by the dominant white culture. Despite Johnson's emphasis on the ambivalent communities on board *the Republic* in reclaiming black manhood, he unwittingly represents this in a way that devalues black womanhood and thus falls into the trap of reinforcing sexist stereotypes.

Sofia Fytopoulou is an MA student of North American Studies at Leiden University.

## **Diana Wagner. 'Monsters at Home': Maskings in Siri Hustvedt's Novels**

Siri Hustvedt's fascination with masks, monsters, and disguises provide an understanding of her concept of identity and self-other relationship. Pseudonyms and masks blur the boundaries between fiction and reality and reveal the ambiguities of truth and the complexities of human perception. Hustvedt's characters have different reasons to wear masks. Some seek for their true self or an intersubjective synergy with the other or a shelter to hide them from a hostile environment, whereas others want to cover their monstrosity and manipulate people. Hustvedt shows how wearing somebody else's face as a mask can result in the production of a monster.

**Diana Wagner** is writing her PhD thesis on Hustvedt at the University of Marburg, Germany.

---

## **Session 8: Reframing American History**

Venue: 11A-37

Chair: Dr. Maarten Zwieters

**Tim de Wit. *The Racialization of Pontiac: A comparison of Robert Rogers' and Francis Parkman's Works on the Pontiac War of 1763-1764***

The Pontiac War, known in the words of Francis Parkman as the 'Conspiracy of Pontiac', has entered American history as one of the largest American Indian uprisings against the European colonists. This failed uprising has inspired several important historical works in the 1700s and the 1800s. It is the intend of this paper to compare two sources by the eighteenth century frontiersman Robert Rogers on to Francis Parkman's *The Conspiracy of Pontiac* of 1851. A comparison to

earlier texts on the same subject reveals just how much Parker's nineteenth century racial themes inform his version of the same events.

Tim de Wit is a Research master student at VU University Amsterdam

**Carleen Hardin. *Combating Nativism: Irish Assimilation in Nineteenth Century America***

Nativism has been adopted in every generation of Americans, and its patterns have been highly repetitive despite changing ideals, political stances, and centuries. At mid-nineteenth century, however, one particular group was highly ostracized by native-born Americans and, as a result, had to fight to become "American": the Irish. In order to successfully assimilate, the Irish combated nativist prejudice in many ways, but the three most utilized were military service, political activism, and reinforcement of their "whiteness." These attempts at assimilation eventually led to their successful integration into nineteenth century American society despite their poverty, Catholicism, and what nativists termed "foreignness."

Carleen Hardin is an MA student of American Studies at the University of Amsterdam.

**Janne Heling. *American Folklore: What Might Have Been***

When W.W. Newell founded the American Folklore Society in 1888 his objective was clear: collecting "the fast-vanishing remains of folklore in America". With Newell and his collaborator Franz Boas, American folklore scholarship graduated from a hobby to an organized anthropological discipline, with orality as folklore's defining feature. A rival vision came from the Chicago Folklore Society, organized in 1891 by F.S. Bassett. He saw folklore as art-form first and foremost, but his vision fell largely into oblivion with his death only two years later. This paper examines these foundations of folklore research in America: what it was and might have been.

Janne Heling is a reMA student in history and MA student in American Studies at the University of Amsterdam.

---

## **Session 9: America in Words and Pictures**

Venue: 11A-36

Chair: Dr. Jaap Kooijman

### **Jon van Zytveld. *Conditioning and Complicity: Adapting American Psycho's Unreliable Narrator***

Rather than facilitating an easy answer regarding potential serial killer Patrick Bateman's perceived guilt or lack thereof, this paper explicates the extent to which Mary Harron's 2000 film adaptation of Brett Easton Ellis' *American Psycho* implicates the viewer in Bateman's crimes. Unlike the novel, which overtly presents Bateman's unreliability from its first chapter, the film defers the reveal of the protagonist's insanity, allowing the viewer to take his actions as fact and, thus, become complicit in the killings.

Jon Van Zytveld is a ReMa student of Literary Studies in English at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

### ***Ekphrasis in Prose: On Henry Miller's The Air-Conditioned Nightmare***

While the term "ekphrasis" denotes a literary genre, its mechanism is not limited to poetry. In analogy to Leo Marx' distinction between the pastoral as a literary genre and pastoralism as a literary mode, I will therefore propose a distinction between ekphrasis and ekphrasism.

Like pastoralism, ekphrasism is not ideologically neutral, but a powerful tool both for visionary writing but also for ideological manipulation. Due to its photographic illustrations and its vivid descriptions of landscapes and cityscapes, Henry Miller's travelogue *The Air-Conditioned Nightmare* is an ideal example for ekphrasism in prose.

Oliver Taenzer is an MA student in the "Literatures in English" programme at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

**Shannon Maher. *Baz Luhrmann Reaching for The Green Light: A Comparative Analysis of The Great Gatsby Novel and Film.***

This paper will provide a comparative analysis of F. Scott Fitzgerald's 1925 novel *The Great Gatsby*, and Baz Luhrmann's 2013 film adaptation of the same name. The point of departure is the different ideological-meaning effects that occur with adaptation from novel to film. From there, the particular focus of this paper is the explicit invitation to a more critical viewing position in Luhrmann's adaptation. The focus will be divided into three areas: word versus image, unreliable narration, and the Bazmark. This will be done with use of Mieke Bal's theory of Narratology.

Shannon Maher is an MA student of Literary Studies: Literatures in English at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.