

## Abstracts

⇒ **Imagination, Representation, and Reality in the Peopling of Anglo-American Texas: Stephen F. Austin as Visionary and Pragmatist** (Gregg CANTRELL)

In this essay, Gregg Cantrell examines the leader of one of the great migrations of American history: Stephen F. Austin, who spearheaded Anglo-American immigration into Mexican Texas in the 1820s and 1830s. Granted permission in 1821 to bring three hundred American families into the sparsely settled northern Mexican province, Austin made Texas colonization his life's work. "My ambition," he wrote, "has been to succeed in redeeming Texas from its wilderness state by means of the plough alone, in spreading over it North American population enterprise and intelligence. In doing this I hoped to make the fortune of thousands and my own amongst the rest." His statement hints at mixed motives. On one hand, "redeeming Texas from its wilderness state" seems to carry an idealistic vision of civilization conquering barbarism, with the verb "redeeming" carrying quasi-religious overtones. On the other hand, making his "fortune" clearly loomed large in Austin's calculations. Stephen F. Austin's case has much to teach us about the complex role that imagination and idealism played in the expansion of the United States into the Spanish/Mexican Southwest. Modern borderlands historians have tended to emphasize the sordid pecuniary motives of the Americans who conquered the West. A nuanced view, however, of "pioneers" like Austin reveals that both idealism and pragmatic concerns figured into the settlement of the American West. As the novelist Larry McMurtry aptly put it, Explorers and pioneers of all stamps needed imagination, much as athletes need carbohydrates."

⇒ **A Pleasurable Exertion: Writing an Immigrant Identity** (Kathleen A. DEHAAN)

By the middle of the 20th century, America needed a re-branding. The persistence of racial segregation combined with the tendency of some Europeans to view America as culturally inferior, gave the country an image problem at the beginning of its geopolitical struggle with the Soviet Union. As a result, during the 1950's, The Common Council for American Unity directed a well-coordinated program to create a new image of America. Recognizing the value of immigrant correspondence in this public relations battle, the CCAU launched the *Letters From America* campaign, appealing to the 35 million citizens of foreign birth or foreign parentage to correspond with family overseas about life in the United States. The CCAU advised participants that they "just tell the truth." Letters represented a familiar forum within immigrant communities. Estimates suggest that in 1950 more than 178 million letters were mailed overseas, with 21 million heading into "Iron Curtain" countries. The US wanted to put that correspondence to use during the days of McCarthy and the Red Scare to prove allegiance and to be a "real American.". The CCAU *Letters From America* campaign is a fascinating look into

the intersection of state-sponsored activities and media/cultural production during the Cold War era. This essay will discuss the *Letters From America* campaign and argue that by leveraging the traditionally private sphere of personal correspondence, the CCAU created a larger public sphere with the pretense of a fully participative discursive arena. It will also raise the question of whether or not the ideological demands of the Cold War actually suppressed deliberative rhetoric within immigrant communities across the United States.

⇒ **Remembering Immigration in the Rural Midwest after World War II** (David ZWART)

This article argues that, after World War II, Americans of the Midwest whose immigrant ancestors had built churches in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, constructed a story that placed themselves in the heart of the national story, a story of good immigrants making the land, building institutions, and having a strong faith. The geographic focus is on rural Protestant congregations that stood at the heart of the social and cultural patterns of the rural Midwest. The corpus is based upon booklets published on the occasion of congregational anniversary celebrations. They provide the main evidence for understanding how these Midwesterners thought about America and placed themselves—and their immigrant ancestors—within the borders of the mainstream American story. The past is thus used to construct an immigrant identity after World War II that fits a larger narrative about America and its borders.

⇒ **US Immigration Enforcement and the Making of Unintended Returnees** (Oscar F. GIL-GARCIA)

US immigration enforcement has led to a rise in the number of deportations. Several studies identify deportees as more likely to attempt re-entry to reunify with family members in a variety of international settings. These demographic changes have prompted some scholars to theorize how deportation produces a unique mobility subject: the *unintended returnee*. The importance of studying *unintended returnees* is amplified when we examine the 3.1 million unauthorized migrants deported by the US between 2005-2013. Over 1.5 million children living in the US were impacted by these removals. Data from the US Department of Homeland Security, indicate that among those who remigrate, the majority are those with US born children. While unauthorized reentry, is not new, the forms that return migrations take reveal changes in the organization of clandestine border-crossings that heighten the risk of violence. To provide insight on how these changes may impact deportees who remigrate, this article examines the chain of events that followed a 2006 immigration work-site raid and deportation of a migrant who was separated from his US based family. The concept of clandestinity – licit and illicit strategies that enable surreptitious cross-border mobility – is employed to understand how this person, following deportation, leverages his involvement in a human smuggling network as a smuggler (*coyote*) to reenter without authorization. By drawing inferences from a single case, I elucidate how immigration enforcement measures, along with limited avenues for humanitarian relief, may create

conditions that compel deportees to defy the power of the state to produce involuntary transnational families and rely on illicit clandestine migration services to enable family reunification.

⇒ **Beyond Borders: Revisiting the Concept of ‘Frontier’ in the Age of Global Terrorism** (Saïd OUAKEB)

**Abstract:** Parallel to the traditional American immigration narrative runs another historical and political reality of the immigrant in the United States. While the semantics of American immigration has been extremely beneficial to the U.S., the political and legislative apparatus –often with the support of the American public– has never ceased to limit and restrict access to migrants in a country that has nevertheless been described as a “nation of immigrants”.

The restrictionist discourse —whether it creates a Manichean dichotomy between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ migrants or suggests an identity and cultural gap— relies today on a composite approach that mixes neo-nativist ideas and national security arguments. As exemplified by statements made by Donald Trump, immigrants are sometimes characterized, without nuance or distinction, as potential criminals and terrorists.

Building on the concept of “frontier”, the aim of this paper is to refocus the issue of immigration in a more international perspective. Indeed, the current immigration debate in the U.S. draws the contours of a “Security Frontier”, material and physical (border fence and border security) as well as political and symbolic (soft power, diplomacy). The distinctive feature of this “frontier” lies in its necessarily *international* dimension.

The U.S. is therefore faced with a major challenge: while the Congress and the President are pressured to ensure the security of the country, discriminatory measures and stigmatizing remarks against immigrants proliferate in the country, which undermines and weakens the position of the U.S. on the “Security Frontier”.

⇒ **The Conservative Discourse Behind the US-Mexico Border Wall vs. Co-operation for Cross-Border Regional Development** (Hugo RANGEL TORRIJO)

In a context of President D. Trump’s policy to build a wall along the entire US-Mexico border, this text aims to analyze the conservative discourse behind that wall erected by the US government. The wall replaces migration policies, and above all, is a consequence of the construction of a closed national identity advocated by conservative groups in the United States. This discourse should be understood in a historical perspective of anti-immigration rhetoric in this country. Actually, the nativism of these groups produces the social exclusion of migrants, especially Latin Americans. In this perspective, we analyze the symbolism of the wall illustrating the great North–South economic and social cleavage. The construction of the border wall is, according to conservative groups, a safety measure to prevent terrorism, stop drug trafficking and illegal immigration, but it is rather a response to the fear conveyed in this xenophobic discourse. The fact that Trump insists unrealistically, that Mexico would pay for this project, is merely a discursive complaint. In the context of a global economy, the wall does not meet any economic needs. In fact, transborder mobility and trade are vibrant

and create jobs for the border region in both countries. Contrary to Trump's claims, the wall blocks this mobility and prevents the proper management of the border and the establishment of environmental cooperation.

⇒ **On immigration, life, identity** (Interview of Yehuda SHARIM by Susanne BERTHIER and Paul OTTO)

Yehuda Sharim's film *We Are In It* features visceral scenes from the everyday lives of immigrants in Houston. For them, Houston is a second, third or even fourth city of residence, both home, and metropolis of hostility. Here, they are safe, restless, part of a diaspora that struggles to find meaning beyond labels of foreigner, immigrant, undocumented, alien, and refugee.

In *We Are In It*, Sharim's camera follows Hussein, a recent immigrant to Houston, Texas, from Baghdad, Iraq, in a crowd rallying in favor of "A Nation of Immigrants" demanding something like justice. Karla—"My name is Karla, not undocumented!"—walks in her neighborhood through the thickness of the night. She talks about her parents when they crossed the USA-Mexican border. Now, she recalls her childhood, the days that she saved money to fix her glasses. Just like this immense wave of nomads from Africa, Middle East, and Asia, for whom "to migrate," "to cross," and "to seek refuge" is a way of life, Karla has developed that sensibility to see beyond borders.

After leaving his beloved Myanmar, Tu tu has lived twenty-five years in a refugee camp in Thailand. Now, eight years after his arrival to the USA, where he is expected to become free finally, he is struggling with providing for his family with a minimum wage of \$7.5 per hour. Every day, he films his family growing up in Houston, dreaming of making a movie, and farming his land while growing vegetables in the community garden. Unobtrusively, Sharim's camera moves into the lives of immigrants who tell their stories and challenges, share moments of their lives and reveal their hopes and dreams.

⇒ **Being Arab-American: Stereotyping and Representation in Arabian Jazz**  
(Sonia FARID)

This paper aims at tackling the dilemma of representation in the novel *Arabian Jazz* (1993) by Jordanian American writer Diana Abu-Jaber. This is mainly done through emphasizing the role the text plays in breaking a decades-long tradition in which Arab American writers were pre-occupied with presenting a carefully-crafted identity that was to be the mouthpiece of the entire community and that was, in many cases, more cosmetic than realistic and representative of how Arabs wish to be seen rather than what they really are. The paper highlights how the author uses the text, released after the Gulf War and the September 11 attacks, to examine the complexity of Arab identity, which does not technically belong to a particular ethnicity—hence does not easily fit into any of the common Western categorizations—, and of Arab American identity, which undergoes a process of constant transformation and negotiation. Through analyzing the intricate relations between Arab and Arab American characters in the

novel and their interaction with both the Arab and American worlds, the paper will also look into the extent to which the novelist managed to question, defy, and reconstruct stereotypes, whether those formed about the self or the other, in order to position the text within the Arab American tradition and determine its role in providing a truthful portrayal of the Arab community in the United States. The paper underlines the way Abu-Jaber breathes life into the members a community that had for years been treated as types required to represent rather than humans seeking a voice.

⇒ **Dark Passages: African American World War II GIs, Blackness, and Border Town Life and Cultures in 1940s Southern Arizona** (Robert F. JEFFERSON, Jr.)

Through an examination of the fateful encounters between African American soldiers stationed at Fort Huachuca and indigenous populations who lived and labored in areas located in close proximity to the military installation, Robert F. Jefferson argues that the racial and ethnic traditions, customs, and practices that existed along the Arizona-Northern Mexico border during the early 1940s were far more fluid than scholars have ever imagined. Exploring the massive influx of black recruits and military families who entered the region, the piece points out that they found that the cultural mores and racial fault lines established in border towns like Naco, Agua Prieta, Hereford, and Nogales reflected an elasticity and a syncretic dynamism that was largely absent in desert metropolitan areas like Tucson and Phoenix. In the process, the racial identity making and cultural exchanges that frequently took place along the border frequently outdistanced the racist and xenophobic politics practiced in official Washington and Phoenix at the time. But the moments of interethnic unity were also freighted with danger and uncertainty as black GIs found themselves standing face to face with the racial enmity and class antagonism that structured daily life along the Arizona-Mexico border. The piece concludes that the complexities surrounding the fateful encounters between all of the parties in the border areas during the war and how these interactions were framed and interpreted by politicians, pundits, and border townspeople later in the decade have yet to be fully understood.

⇒ **Can the Undocumented Immigrant Speak? Exploring Decolonial Thinking in Latinx Literature and Cinema** (María Teresa DEPAOLI)

The topic of undocumented immigration in literature and cinema is particularly relevant during the uncertainty of Donald Trump's administration, as sanctuary cities remain under attack. One of the most sympathetic undocumented immigrant groups is the so-called "DREAMers", due to their support of the DREAM Act. These are young adults who were brought to the U.S. as undocumented children by their parents. They have grown up in U.S. society, and very often don't even remember their countries of origin. Many of them speak little or none of their parent's native language and have been educated in public and private U.S. schools. This essay focuses on young undocumented immigrant students by primarily analyzing the nonfiction texts: Joshua Davis's *Spare Parts: Four Undocumented Teenagers, One Ugly Robot, and the Battle*

*for the American Dream*, and Julissa Arce's *My Underground American Dream* memoir. I also discuss the *Spare Parts* film, and Jose Antonio Vargas's documentary, *Documented*. Since migration theory has largely failed to recognize the importance of race and racism in the process of migrant integration, my analysis incorporates theories that center on dismantling western binaries to create hybrid, new non-linear, third spaces of subaltern enunciation, which are valuable in the examination of the always fluid notion of undocumented immigration. Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano's concept of "coloniality of power," Argentinian–Mexican philosopher Enrique Dussel's "principle of solidarity," and Latina theorist Gloria Anzaldúa's notion of "Nepantla," provide essential decolonial thinking to my analysis on the notion of immigration and citizenship in Latinx literature and cinema.