

# MOMENTS

# MOVEMENTS

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*Narratives of Social and Cultural Change*

**English Language Conference**

**Spring 2019**

**Abstract Book**



## **Narrative**

**the thread that weaves us all together**

**Although history's architects, authors, and orators shaped our societal and cultural identities, it is the narrative therein that underlines the human condition. Why, or perhaps, how do narratives reveal such qualities? How does literature, art, and architecture intersect with public spaces, monuments, and media?**

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## Table of Contents

<b>Ryan Brown</b>	
<b>"Falling Man Suspended: The Necessity of DeLillo's Personalized Narrative"</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Jessica Castillo</b>	
<b>"Sister-Wives: The Women of <i>Enemies, A Love Story</i>"</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Berenice Galvez</b>	
<b>" I Belong: The Metamorphoses of A Project Aiming to Draw out the Voices.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>of Graduate Students of Color"</b>	
<b>Isalah Gonzalez</b>	
<b>"Empowering the Queer Latinx Young Adult Through Queer Y.A. Literature"</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Christina Medina</b>	
<b>"The influence of African American English on K-pop"</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Sergio Robles Jr.</b>	
<b>"Masculinity in Helena Maria Viramontes' <i>Their Dogs Came With Them: A.....</i></b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Project With Purpose"</b>	
<b>Rosalena Ruiz</b>	
<b>"John Dos Passos' Literary Cinematics: Subverting Passivity through.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Fragmentation and Re-presentation in 1919"</b>	
<b>Paula Starr Sherrin</b>	
<b>"Effects of the 'Uncanny' in Jordan Peele's <i>Get Out</i>"</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Everth Sotelo</b>	
<b>"The Dialectic of Sensory Experience: Alternative Method of Discourse"</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Abigail Uribe</b>	
<b>"Domesticating the Other: The Loss of Space and Memory in Helena María.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Viramontes' <i>Their Dogs Came with Them</i>"</b>	
<b>Presenter's Biographies</b> .....	<b>11</b>

## Ryan Brown

### *Falling Man* Suspended: The Necessity of DeLillo's Personalized Narrative

As Americans struggled to reframe themselves within the post-9/11 political paradigm and internalize the abstracted grief that pervaded the nation's psyche, authors produced a prolific oeuvre of 9/11 literature to which American readers turned to ameliorate their politico-cultural disenfranchisement. Among the most prominent of these texts is Don DeLillo's *Falling Man*, which diverges from his literary tradition in a way that vexes some critics, who anticipated an epic and panoramic novel. Instead, DeLillo portrays an intimate narrative concerned with the domestic response to 9/11. The criticism that ensued is founded in American society's desire for a grand narrative to provide a construction in which to situate themselves in post-9/11 America. Suitably, Richard Gray's critique insists that *Falling Man* fails to capture the trauma's distinction and urgency, mirroring the governmental resolve that the attacks qualified as a unique violation of America's innocence that demanded immediate response, a grand narrative disseminated through presidential speeches and media coverage. Within this national narrative of victimization, the appropriate response to the attack was an overpowering national unity, as President Bush clearly conveys in his speech on the day of the attacks. Whereas a broad account of cultural trauma would disingenuously reinforce this concept of national unity, DeLillo's centering on the individual Keith Neudecker authentically depicts an America in pieces. In opposition to the generalized grand narrative that Americans depend upon in order to ameliorate the damaged American identity, the personalized narrative of DeLillo's *Falling Man* exposes the contemporary zeitgeist of codependency and works to provide a comprehensible way to process the perceived national trauma.

Jessica Castillo

Sister-Wives: The Women of *Enemies, A Love Story*

Despite the significant amount of Holocaust literature research, little focuses solely on the suffering Jewish women experienced inside Nazi death camps. Until recently, many scholars believe that survivor literature should only include an examination of the horrific attack against European Jews because gendering the Holocaust means minimizing the collective suffering of the Jews as a race. And yet, Holocaust historians have continuously documented that the Nazis utilized methods of dehumanization that intentionally targeted the biological and social factors that only women are vulnerable to. Not only expecting mothers and women with very young children were sent to their immediate deaths once arriving to the deathcamps, female prisoners lived under the constant threat of sexual assault, forced abortions, and faced the difficult decision of bartering sex for safety and food. Furthermore, the violation of female modesty has led both survivors and early Holocaust scholars to often neglect or censor female survival testimonials, overlooking the uniqueness of the woman's experience. However, to fully understand the gendered nature of the Holocaust, this essay analyzes Isaac B. Singer's novel, *Enemies, A Love Story*, and its depiction of female camp survivors attempting to reconcile with their individual traumas while rebuilding their lives in New York City. Through my reading of *Enemies*, I challenge traditional interpretations of Holocaust literature that refuses to acknowledge the female experience and illustrate the Holocaust's physical and psychological exploitation of the female identity.

## **Berenice Galvez**

### **I Belong: The Metamorphoses of A Project Aiming to Draw out the Voices of Graduate Students of Color**

This project seeks to gather the experiences of former and current graduate students of color to understand how mentoring did or so often did not work to support them and myself. The project is a culmination of two different approaches in an attempt to create a conversation within academia. I cross-stitched quotes that described the negative effects of bad mentoring / mentorship relationships that graduate minority students may encounter. Craftivism gave me a voice when I felt I did not have one; now, I aim to nurture an environment in which other students have the opportunity to regain their voice by creating a platform on Twitter conducive to supporting one another and growing as a community. I began by creating a version of my story and experience of the events that transpired at a national conference which was accessible to and visible to the instructors within my department.

## Isaiah Gonzalez

### Empowering the Queer (Latinx) Young Adult Through Queer Y.A. Literature

When a queer Chicano young adult grows up in a heteronormative oriented household, it can be difficult to cope with dominant ideologies that oppress, marginalize, and suppress queer identities. As cultural and religious beliefs and institutions dominate the upbringings of family values, which are directly correlated to heteronormativity and gender roles, the queer young adult can be criticized, harmed, and even rejected for identifying as queer. It can be difficult to sometimes find resources and coping mechanisms for Xicano queer identifying young adults growing up. For the queer young adult reader, it is critical to include queer literature that includes genuine queer characters as protagonists who ultimately transcend the “family” and its ties to anti-queer discourse.

It is important to be able to include positive, genuine, and relatable queer characters within Young Adult Literature that stray away from being secondary or marginalized. What is the importance of having queer and Mexican descent protagonists? Benjamin Alire Saenz’s *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* incorporates two queer Chicano protagonists that deviate from typical family hetero-masculine values and empowers the YA reader to think about a narrative that highlights queer character’s ties to their family. How does a novel like *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* mirror the realities of positive queer and Mexican American family relationships? I will be discussing the impact of having ethnically diverse and queer inclusive characters in YA literature. I will also elaborate on the functions of window and mirror forms of analysis and meditate on the dynamics of Mexican American families and expectations. Lastly, I will talk about the importance of having positive LGBTQ and Ethnically diverse characters as protagonists.



## Christina Medina

### The influence of African American English on K-pop

Korean pop music (K-pop) is on the rise around the world and with that comes the availability to understand the language and cultural significance that is ingrained in this genre of music. One aspect that is consistent within K-pop is the use of African American English (AAE) in both K-pop and K-hip hop. This use of AAE not only reflects the influence of Black culture in the media but it also perpetuates the stereotypical image of Black culture. The stereotypical representation of Black culture spread across movies, television, and at times, commercialized music had become the greatest influence of AAE and Black culture in K-pop. The influx of Black culture that has influenced not only the style but the language of the Korean is on the rise. I investigate the AAE lexical items, which influence K-pop and what impact AAE vocabulary has on the users, taking note of the culture and linguistics contributions AAE has had on the Korean language. To address my findings, the data composed on song lyrics from Korean website melon.com and American website genius.com are used as my primary data source. In addition, I rely on Lisa Green's "African American English" as my main AAE reference, providing a baseline to refer to in terms of usage and syntax. I also refer to Jamie Lee's "Linguistic hybridization in K-pop: discourse of self-assertion and resistance" for additional reference on the development of the influence of AAE beginnings in K-pop and how it has increased in recent years. And thus, this allows us to fully see both the cultural and linguistic influence of African American English in K-pop.

## Sergio Robles Jr.

### Masculinity in Helena Maria Viramontes' *Their Dogs Came With Them*: A Project With Purpose

Helena Maria Viramontes' novel tracks four characters' experience in 1960's Los Angeles and the effect that a changing landscape has on their individual identity as well as the collective community. The novel focuses on the trauma inflicted on the Chicano/a community in East Los Angeles as State-imposed freeways such as the 60 divide the community, mirroring a historical colonization that has repeatedly targeted minority and disenfranchised communities. This essay argues that the novel's protagonists must overcome not only their current trauma but a historic, collective trauma as imposed by patriarchal and colonial forces. I seek to build on the arguments of Bridget Devane, Alicia Munoz, Keri Ann Blanco, and Marcos Sánchez Tranquillo. I aim to differentiate myself from the aforementioned scholars by looking specifically at how masculinity is both portrayed and performed in the novel. Through close readings of passages from both male and female characters, I argue that colonialism is portrayed as a distinct masculine project and that toxic masculinity is responsible for the poisoned environment that the novel's characters must deal with. This essay is divided into four sections. The first outlines the historical trauma that the displaced citizens must grapple with. The second details how masculinity is portrayed in the experiences of the novel's female characters. The third examines masculinity in the novel's male characters. And the fourth section argues how the text serves as an activist text inviting the novel's characters to critique the toxic masculinity present in their community.

Rosalena Ruiz

John Dos Passos' Literary Cinematics: Subverting Passivity through  
Fragmentation and Re-presentation in *1919*

Appropriation of the camera and news media in John Dos Passos's *1919* evokes the anxiety of modernists around the bisection of seemingly stable concepts of representation and transparency while simultaneously suggest a recognition of the power of such techniques to compel audience response. An isolated exploration of *1919*'s Camera Eye sections contrasted with the media propaganda of the Newsreels contained allows for analysis regarding the convergence of the preeminent socio-cultural forms of the early twentieth century: film and fascism. The Camera Eye and Newsreel sections splay open the tension present in Walter Benjamin's criticism of film and politics: cinema—despite revolutionary potential—veers towards fascist manipulation. This anxiety regarding the passive consumption of art and media and its growing influence on global politics proliferates the form and content of *1919*. Dos Passos relies upon cinematics while critiquing emergent forms of mass media dissemination. Through fragmentation and re-presentation in the literary text instead of on the screen, Dos Passos subverts passive reception while retaining the evocative power of the camera lens and news media. *1919* navigates the interdependent relationship between film, mass media, and politics through the novel's form, probing the volatility of cinematics and news media during the socio-political upheaval of the early twentieth century.

## Paula Starr Sherrin

### Effects of the “Uncanny” in Jordan Peele’s *Get Out*

In his Oscar-winning film *Get Out*, Jordan Peele uses the conventions of Gothic fiction to represent the terror and horror of violent racial subjugation, inverting the forms to create a cinematic world that is ominously both familiar and unfamiliar. Sigmund Freud calls this sense of uncertainty the “uncanny,” the sudden, unpleasant revelation of something that ought to have remained obscured. Peele must surely have read Freud’s “The ‘Uncanny,’” as specifics of that text appear in the film. Peele’s metaphor of “the sunken place” represents the mechanisms of white supremacy, and he uses effects of the “uncanny” to depict this allegory.

Peele uses the conventions of Gothic fiction to portray his indictment of white supremacy as terror against African-Americans, a psychological threat, rather than mere injustice. *Get Out* is released in 2017 in the wake of numerous incidents of lethal force used against unarmed black men, the resurgence of voter suppression, and the scourge of mass incarceration. Peele shows how past outrages of abduction, enslavement, and oppression of African-Americans haunt current inter-racial experiences. His metaphor of the “sunken place” expresses the control exerted by white supremacy. This film can serve as a catalyst for meaningful inter-racial discourse and progressive social change.

## Everth Sotelo

### The Dialectic of Sensory Experience: Alternative Method of Discourse

This essay examines an innovative method to teach academic discourse in a first-year composition course. Composition theorists assert that the reason many students are failing their first year in college is that they have not adequately learned the proper language of the academy. Nonetheless, as Peter Elbow ventured, educators should not view the university as an elitist society but instead help students understand academic discourse via personal writing. An activity known as *Text & Image* teaches academic discourse with personal experiences as a primary source. Students can use academic conventions to transform their experiences into proper essays. This process is referred to as a sensory experience, and it is an epitome of critical pedagogy because it fosters the students' consciousness. Academic discourse is essential to write in the academe properly; when the student uses his sensory experience, he will understand the value of academic discourse. A problem arises when instructors expect students to write in Standard Written English when in fact the student has no experience in the topic. While it is possible to teach proper conventions, freshman essays lack rhetorical force. They write only to adhere to the instructor's expectations but do not realize how their ideas affect their readers. Therefore, assignments like the *Text & Image* tap into the student's consciousness and make them aware of why they write and how writing leads to academic success. Consequently, the essay establishes a conversation with James Moffett, Donald C. Stewart, and David Bartholomae to substantiate the use of sensory experience in Composition.

## Abigail Uribe

### Domesticating the Other: The Loss of Space and Memory in Helena María Viramontes' *Their Dogs Came with Them*

The development of freeway construction in East Los Angeles during the 1960s through the 1970s led to violent forces that further marginalized Latinx communities. This paper examines the economic and social immobility, geographic displacement, the trauma of the body and the mind are some of the violent forces that Viramontes represents as part of the oppression affecting the community and the individuals of East Los Angeles. This form of violence directly impacts the lives of Ana, Ben, Ermila, Tranquilina, and Turtle, and reflects the systemic forces that hinder the social, political, and intellectual capacities of people of color. Though some may argue that this trauma is short term and individuals will grow accustomed to their new lives and homes, it is essential to understand that this kind of displacement is extremely traumatic, long-lasting, and it can be passed down from generation to generation. Freeways were designed and strategically placed on land that disrupted the collective social growth of people of color, and the government ignored the environmental impacts that affect the surrounding communities. Therefore, the characters are victims of multiple types of abuse, and it is imperative to critique the environmental racism, government policies on freeway construction, historical violence and trauma, white flight, and the operations of racism and class inequality captured in Viramontes' novel.

## Presenter's Biographies

**Ryan Brown** is a graduate student currently pursuing his Master's degree in English Literature and Rhetoric and Composition at California State Polytechnic University Pomona, where he also earned his Bachelor's degree in English Literature and Language with minors in French and Teaching English as a Second Language. He teaches Contemporary Literature as a Teaching Associate at Cal Poly Pomona, and his primary research interests are in modern American literature with a focus on New Historicism. He plans to teach literature and composition at the community college level while continuing to explore research projects and opportunities.

**Jessica Castillo** received her Bachelor's degree from California State Polytechnic University Pomona in English Literature. She is now in her first year as a double Literature major in the Master's program and hopes to continue with her education, receive a Ph.D., and go on to teach English Literature. Her interests include research in colonial and postcolonial literature, literature of exile, and contemporary American literature.

**Berenice Galvez** is a second year graduate student. She hopes to pursue a career in technical writing after graduate school. Berenice's interests are in technology and rhetoric, and its effects on interpersonal and professional communication, and writing as a form of social action, both in physical and digital platforms.

**Isaiah Gonzalez** is a double major in English and Chicano Studies at California State University Dominguez Hills. He is also a poet. One of his prose-poetry pieces appeared in the 2018 edition of *Enjambed* magazine. His presentation is titled "Empowering the Queer Latinx Young Adult through Queer Young Adult Literature."

**Christina Medina** is an MA- English: TESL & Certificate in Rhetoric and Composition student at California State University Dominguez Hills. Her presentation African American English's effects on K-pop is an extension of her current research of Konglish (Korean English) effects on Standardized English Exam (TOEFL, IELTS, & TOEIC) and pop culture. She hopes to pursue her Ph.D. in Linguistics with a focus on cultural linguistics.

**Sergio Robles Jr.** is a graduate student of English at California State University Long Beach. His studies focus on queer and Latinx literature, with an emphasis on the intersection of the two. He has recently enjoyed getting lost in 18th century British literature.

**Rosalena Ruiz** is pursuing her MA in English with an emphasis on twentieth and twenty-first century American Literature at California State University Long Beach. Her primary research interests include Critical Race theory, Queer theory, Marxist theory, and Cultural Studies. Rosalena hopes to utilize her studies in literature, theory, and culture to conceptualize new existences for marginalized communities and promote radical collective healing.

**Paula Starr Sherrin** is a candidate for a Master's degree in English Literature with an emphasis in Rhetoric and Composition, set to graduate in May at California State University Dominguez Hills. She is currently writing a thesis entitled "'Bewhored' and 'Broken': Gendered Experiences of Trauma in *Titus Andronicus* and *The Changeling*."

**Everth Sotelo** is a graduate student pursuing an MA in Rhetoric and Composition at California State University Dominguez Hills. His research interest includes Critical Pedagogy, Classical Rhetoric, Program Assessment, and Critical Media Literacy. His presentation stems from his research on critical pedagogy and the influence of technology into first year compositions—from his class observation. A firm proponent of the importance of academic discourse for success in the university and the influence of the space as a means for writing, Everth believes that writing is a cognitive process and that students must use their perspectives on sociopolitical landscapes to produce effective papers. He obtained his Bachelor's in English with emphasis in secondary education and a minor in Philosophy from California State University Los Angeles and wishes to pursue a Ph.D. in Rhetoric and Composition.

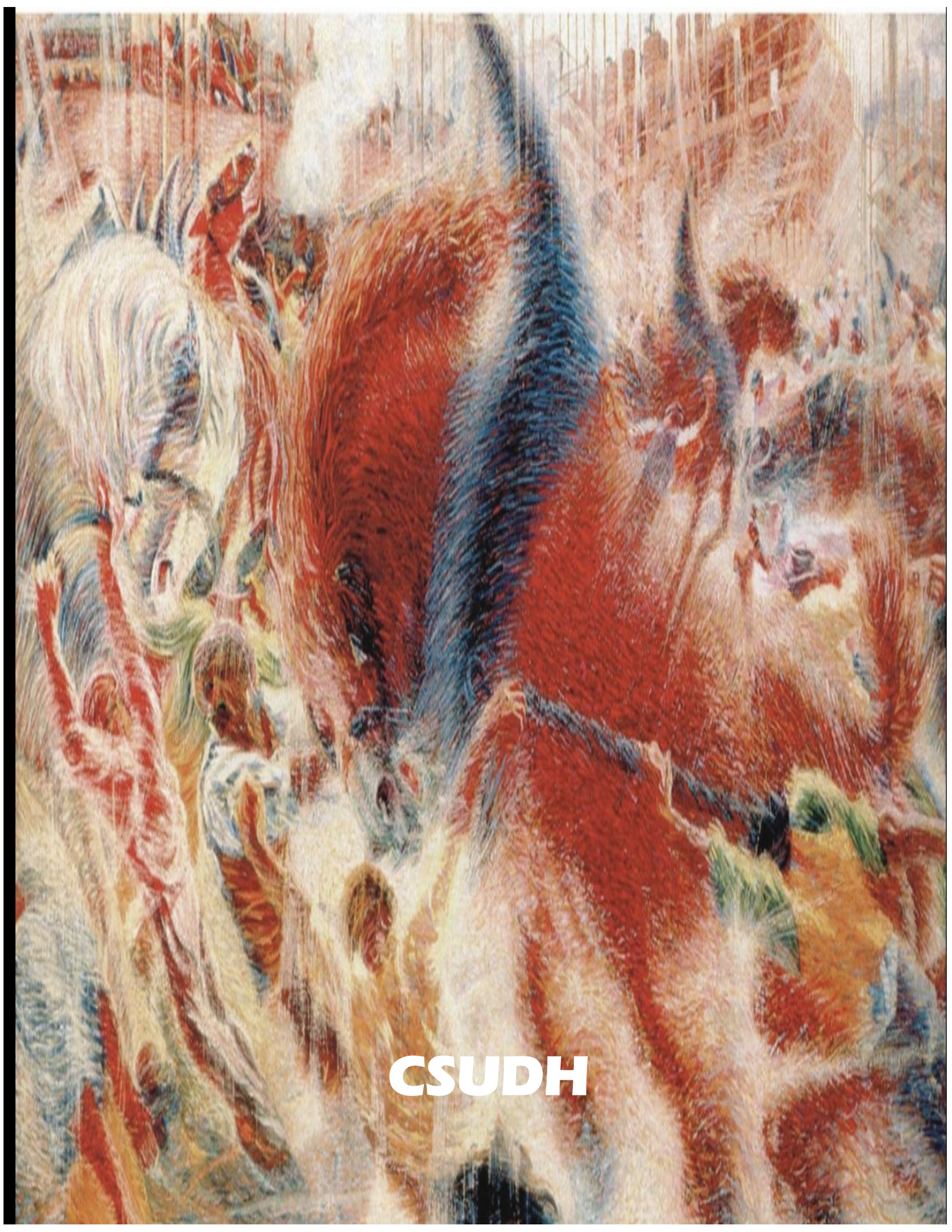
**Abigail Uribe** is pursuing her MA in Composition and Rhetoric at the California State University Long Beach. Her research interests include Ethnic, Gender and Sexuality, and Race literature. She is interested in the politics of culture in post-colonial conditions. She is also interested in critical theories related to Trauma Studies, which she believes offers a way into examining the lasting effects of spiritual and physical confinement brought about by the histories of colonialism and racism.

#### Keynote Speaker Biography

**Lauren Heintz** is an Assistant Professor of English and a Faculty Fellow at the Center for the Study of Gender and Sexualities at California State University Los Angeles. Lauren received her Ph.D in Literature with an emphasis in Cultural Studies from the University of California San Diego. From 2015-2017, she held a Mellon Postdoctoral Fellowship in the English Department at Tulane University, and from 2017-2018 she was a Visiting Professor at Pomona College. Lauren teaches and conducts research in multi-ethnic U.S. literature from the nineteenth-century to the present, as well as queer studies and gender studies. She is currently working on a manuscript titled *Racist Attachments: Queer Genealogies of U.S. Slavery and Settler Colonialism*. Lauren's scholarship has been supported by the ACLS and Mellon foundations, and her work has appeared in *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, *Studies in American Fiction*, *The Feminist Wire*, and forthcoming in *American Quarterly*.







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