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ABSTRACTS

Johannes Binotto
University of Zurich

Pitted Against Itself: Internal conflict in/of digital action cinema.

When in 2008 the digitally enhanced James Bond movie „Quantum of Solace" hit the theaters, critics deplored its over-rapid camera and editing style for making the action scenes virtually incomprehensible. Instead of being immersed, so they argued, the audience would feel alienated from what they see on screen.
However, I would like to argue, that, far from being gratuitous exercise in style, this kind of complicated representation is part and parcel of the complications on the story level. While in this film it becomes visually unclear who is fighting against whom, so too it does figuratively. And while the high definition image is too dense and contradictory to read, also our hero and his actions seem to be inconsistent. If in the past, action films such as the 007 movies have been about the conflict between two distinct parties, with digital cinema this conflict has become an internal one. While theorists such as Paul Virilio and Jean Baudrillard have unjustly suspected the digital image of offering perfect delusions, movies such as "Quantum of Solace" or Michael Mann's "Miami Vice" proof the very opposite. Instead of glossing over differences, digital action cinema produces conflicting images, which constantly enact their own contradiction – images pitted against themselves, pixel by pixel.

Georg Drennig
University of Vienna

The Vancouver Special in the City of Glass: Imaginaries of Place as a Site of Contestation

This presentation will investigate Douglas Coupland's book *City of Glass* as an assertion of a hegemonic imaginary of Vancouver as a post-Fordist city of glass towers near water, and the conflict it engages in with texts such as Charles Demers' *Vancouver Special*, which issues a challenge to the hegemonic imaginary and the spaces it asserts.
In *City of Glass*, Douglas Coupland sets out to offer readers a collection of places, habits, and groups that define Vancouver. As the title implies, this imaginary leans towards a select set of aspects that are mostly in line with the hegemonic image the city strives to project. Charles Demers' *Vancouver Special*, in contrast, reads as a counterimaginary to Coupland's book. With the "Special" in the title referring to the blue-collar building style widespread outside of the city's downtown, Demers investigates sites and groups conspicuously absent or excluded from both Coupland's and urban planners' city of glass.
The struggle of those on the margins to be visible and have a role in shaping the city that tries to exclude them thus also takes place in creative non-fiction. Demers' and Coupland's text do more than represent conflicting imaginaries of place: they struggle over the imaginary space in order contest the city itself.

Erwin Feyersinger
University of Innsbruck

Movie Titles Moving through the Air: The Immaterial Material Existence of Virtual Graphics

Contemporary moving images combine photographic and computer-generated
elements in increasingly complex ways. New software facilitates an almost seamless spatial integration of virtual elements into live-action environments. This visual effects technique is usually referred to as match moving or motion tracking.
The paper presentation focuses on computer-generated words that seem to share a physical space with a live-action environment while they are visually and ontologically conspicuously distinct from this environment as, for example, in *Stranger than Fiction* (2006). The perception of these words creates a conflict. They are part of something that they, at the same time, to not belong to. The paper will explore the nature of this conflicting perception and how its appeal turned into a major trend in contemporary visual design.

Saskia Fuerst
University of Innsbruck

The Mammy vs The Goddess of Storms: Conflicting Representations of Aging Women in African American Literary Works

Conflicts arise when two different ideas, representations, and cultures are joined together in one place. Within the black community in the US, the "twoness" of the African American selves as described by W.E.B. Du Bois creates a space of tension in literary works on older African American women; the oppressive image of the Mammy figure (the "American" self) and the empowering image of the Yoruba Goddess of Storms and Change (the "African" self) are at odds with each other. Du Bois contends that the two selves must be unified for a positive black identity. This challenge is reflected in the conflicting narrative structures and representations of the protagonists in the novels by Gloria Naylor and Paule Marshall. However, through these conflicts, the authors constructively analyze oppressive literary traditions towards black women and present alternative representations to deconstruct stereotypical notions surrounding older black women. By embracing a Yoruba Goddess as a source of creative legitimacy and as a symbol for constructive change in the resolution of community and/or personal clashes, these authors provide a creative solution that neither denies the "American" nor the "African" identity but provides self development through the expansion of notions surrounding black women and aging.

Martin Heusser
University of Zurich

Conflicting Narratives: The Fight for Innocence in Marvel Comics' *The 'Nam*

In 1986, roughly a decade after the United States had formally ended their military engagement in Vietnam, Marvel launched a new comic book series entitled *The 'Nam*. Designed to tell the late war from a soldier's perspective, the comic ran through 84 monthly issues until it was terminated in September 1993. The purported quasi-documentary nature of *The 'Nam* ("Every action, every firefight is based on fact") is a large-scale attempt to superimpose onto the torn national memory a new version of "Vietnam" – one in which the conflict in South-east Asia emerges as a justified war. The series' principal protagonist, Ed Marks, is constructed as an American Adam – a figure

of heroic innocence: naïve but honest, well-intentioned and incorruptible. In this paper I analyze the cross-medial strategies used in *The 'Nam* in order to come to terms with the moral/ethical issues raised by the continual use of violence and to preserve the guiltlessness of those involved in the war.

Roberta Hofer
University of Innsbruck

"…controlled by the world's greatest puppeteer": Human marionettes and their metaleptic potential in *Being John Malkovic* and *Stranger Than Fiction*

Most importantly, the films seem to put a baffling spin to the logic of reality. In the first movie, a puppeteer finds a strange way to enter John Malkovich's head and literally utilize him as a life-size puppet, controlling his every move and, ultimately, his whole life. In the second film, a contemporary author makes the shocking realization that while writing her new book, she is in fact controlling the fate of her main character not only on paper, but in real life, as her protagonist turns out to be a living person.
In both scenarios, real life seemingly blends with the genre fiction, as, on the one hand, fictional characters come to life, while, on the other hand, real people are fictionalized. Indeed, it is a conflict of different cultures, as literature and performance manifest themselves outside their normal environment, mix, and also influence each other. This becomes especially evident, as classical theory on theater and puppeteering is applied to the medium of film. Also, the recent study of metalepsis offers some crucial answers as to what (culturally) different worlds and borders the viewer encounters, and how they are transgressed.

Anna Iatsenko
University of Geneva

Conflict and Agency in Toni Morrison's *A Mercy*

In her ninth novel entitled *A Mercy*, Toni Morrison explores the beginnings of America. Set in the 1680's, the novel engages with such problematic issues as the institutionalisation of slavery, forced conversion to Christianity of the native peoples, the sale of European women for overseas marriages and various other instances where different epistemes enter into direct and oftentimes brutal conflict. Opposed to the general tumult of the period, the novel sets up a microcosm of early America in a more private space – that of the farm belonging to Jacob Vaark – where the inhabitants of various backgrounds coexist peacefully and productively until Jacob's death. This event precipitates a sudden discord amongst the four main female characters and, very quickly, the old epistemes resurface and the women no longer find their differences helpful for daily survival; rather, they become a cause of alienation and disputes. This will be the point of focus for this paper: through the examples of the characters' behaviour in this critical situation, I will look at the mechanisms that reinstate epistemological conflicts between the characters. In answering the question of how these mechanisms function, I will argue that it is the women's initial and total abdication of agency – their voluntary handing over of their responsibility for themselves to another – that is the primary cause of the rapid deterioration of their relationships. This problematic is further enacted by the text itself when one of the narrators, at the very end of the novel, reclaims her agency through the act of writing the story.

Louis J. Kern
Hofstra University,
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The 'Penis Trust' and ‚Invasive Heism' vs. the 'Fucking Trust': Free Love, Free Speech, Free Thought, Free Labor, and Feminism—the Social and Sexual Radicalism of Angela (Tilton) and Ezra Heywood

Ezra Heywood (1829-93) was an individualist anarchist, freethinker, and social activist engaged in a broad range of reform efforts—abolitionism, pacifism, economic and monetary reform, birth control advocacy, the women's suffrage movement, and the free love movement. After his marriage to Angela Tilton in 1865, the couple worked closely together in a sustained attack on the sexual double standard, the tyranny of institutionalized monogamy, censorship and sexual hypocrisy, and the compression and corruption of the American political and economic infrastructure. Their radicalism found its most forceful expression in the periodical they jointly edited and wrote most of the copy for—the Word (1872-90, 1892-93)

   Their articles challenged the morality of Victorian America and specifically the brutally repressive campaign of Anthony Comstock free speech as it related to matters of sexuality and contraception. The Word was a provocative publication that offered a forum for counter-cultural visions of a reformed American society that embodied frank and open discussions of sexuality, alternatives to monogamy and radical reconstruction of gender identities. The text of the Word eschewed euphemisms, boldly and openly using common four-letter words to describe the genitals and the act of intercourse. It energetically promoted free love, elective motherhood, and free access to birth control. It strongly advocated woman suffrage as a means of the moral reform of politics and as a fundamental human right, and propounded a modern vision of feminism—equal pay for equal work, and indeed, the absolute equality of women and men that made the periodical a beacon in the struggle for gendered civil liberty.

   The focus of the paper will be on the counter-cultural challenge to dominant social institutions and traditional morality especially in the areas of marriage reform, free love, contraception and abortion rights, female ownership of their sexual bodies, and the struggle to provide uncensored and open expression of vernacular sexual language. Sources for the paper will include the text of the Word, with particular attention to decade 1875-85, and Ezra Heywood's pamphlet publications—Uncivil Liberty (1870), advocating female equality, and Cupid's Yokes (1871), an anti-marriage tract.

Cornelia Klecker
University of Insbruck

Conflicting Narrative Authorities in *Fight Club*

David Fincher's *Fight Club* managed to create one of the most well-known and frequently discussed surprise endings in the last two decades. *Fight Club*'s lasting popularity can be traced back at least partly to the fact that the 'coolest' character, namely, Tyler Durden, famously portrayed by Brad Pitt, is simply erased towards the end of the movie. This kind of "narrative self-erasure," which is usually associated with experimental postmodernist writings, presupposes a highly self-conscious narration. *Fight Club* plays with classical story-telling conventions, or, in other words, viewer assumptions, particularly when it comes to the authority of the different conflicting narrative instances. When the various authorities offer contradicting narratives the

viewers are faced with a big conflict: who is telling the story, who delivers the images, and who is telling the truth? This paper seeks to analyze how the film toys with the authentication of narrative authorities in order to perfect a narrative self-erasure by applying various narratological approaches, for example, Lubomir DoloŽel's observations on truth and authenticity in narrative, Marie-Laure Ryan's on impersonal narration, and Francesco Casetti's remarks on the function of the enunciator.

Martina Koegeler
American Studies Department, University of Graz, Austria
Department of Cultural Analysis and Theory, SUNY Stony Brook, USA

To Publish or To Perish? The Role of Auto-Orientalism in Contemporary Arab American Literature

The genre of Arab American novels has experienced a veritable boom in the last decade, which opens up a wide field of questions concerning the aesthetics and politics of Arab American literature in a post 9/11 US context. In my paper, I propose that Arab /Muslim American women writers employ varying forms of Auto-Orientalism to gain access to the US literary market via citation of orientalist tropes and thus actively participate in the majority discourses surrounding Islam, Muslim women and Americanness. Citation of established orientalist tropes provides access to publication by way of its mutual legibility by majority discourses and minority writers, and while such citation can easily confirm existing stereotypes, it might also work as a space for contestation and subversion of a binary/feminized orientalist reference. Even though the most common form of Auto-Orientalism is an essentialist type in the popular 'oppressed Muslim women memoirs', I argue that a recent wave of Arab American novels challenges East/West binaries by squarely placing Islam within and as part of American culture via strategic auto-orientalist references. In this talk I look at Mohja Kahf's novel *The girl in the tangerine scarf* as an example of such a strategic form of Auto-Orientalism in search of its characteristics, transformative possibilities, internal contradictions and potential impact on American audiences.

Aviva Köberlein
University of Münster

Masculinities at Stake: Conflicting Masculinities and the Vampire in Contemporary Popular Fiction and Film

Contemporary popular vampire fiction and relevant films stage and condense conflicting extremes of masculinities: The 'new men', marked by intellectual sophistication, define themselves and a certain idea of empowerment on the basis of their controlled refinement and sexual self-restraint. In contradistinction to that, the originally British cult of laddishness confronts changes in gender roles, in particular female emancipation and corresponding feelings of male disempowerment, with superlative machismo and an orientation towards reactionary models of manliness.
The male vampire, on the one hand, is very often characterised by hyperbolic manliness translated into hyper-sexual appeal and attractiveness for his female counterpart, the desire for the metonymic bite and the male vampire himself. Simultaneously, on the other hand, the prototypic male vampire attempts to regain autonomy by containing the disruptive force of unbridled sexuality that might, if unleashed, undermine the illusion of secure subjectivity within the hard surface of the male body – moreover, if set free, masculine sexual energy might destroy

the female love interest and hence bring about prosecution by the community represented by the woman.

Neither can the male vampire therefore uphold a closed bodily system abstracted from sexual drives that necessarily impinge upon a male self defined by metaphysical supremacy. Nor can he re-assert his manliness via conventionalised sexual triumph. Whereas the female counterpart therefore threatens to obliterate the male vampire's manliness in these complex ways, the male vampire threatens to obliterate her altogether – which reflects vampiric masculinity's uneasy position in-between competing systems of meaning and performative modes, and its transgressions of both the concrete and the abstract borders of the body and the self.

Barbara Laner
University of Innsbruck

Consuming Media: Conflicting Intermedial Relations in Film

The paper analyzes intermedial negotiations in films via the metaphor of cannibalism. Throughout its development, the medium film has incorporated aesthetic and technical features of its own kind: established art forms and new (digital) media respectively. The actual display of cannibal acts on the narrative and visual level of the films in question selfreflexively discusses matters of intermediality and convergence that pose a challenge to film. Following paradigmatic turns when new media forms or new technology were introduced, film(makers) responded with a self-reflexive staging of the conflict these challenges pose to film using the theme cannibalism. Paradigmatic turns that represent major challenges to film are, for instance, the transition from silent to sound films (*King Kong*, 1933), the introduction of television as a mass product in the 50s or later the introduction of VCR in the 80s (*Videodrome*, 1983). Recently, digitization processes and the Internet lead to major changes of the medium film (*eXistenZ,* 1999; *Diary of the Dead*, 2007). Looking at films from the respective eras, the paper investigates how the theme of cannibalism illustrates the conflicting relation of film to other media, on the one hand, as film's desire for incorporation and on the other, as its fear of being swallowed by them.

Andreas Leisner
University of Innsbruck

Appetite for Destruction: The Cult of the Specialist in Kathryn Bigelow's *The Hurt Locker*

From the perspective of both news media and film, the Iraq War has arguably been a well-covered recent example of cultures in conflict. It is against the backdrop of this particular war that the fate of *The Hurt Locker's* Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) squad is played out. Unlike so many other cinematographic treatments of war in general and the Iraq War in particular, Bigelow's film does not question the reasons for conflict, as conflict itself becomes a reason in its own right: It is stripped of its political surplus baggage and reduced (but by no means simplified) to its essential components – the soldier's experience in modern warfare. The canon of American war films has already dedicated generous amounts of onscreen time to the

latter. However, the fact that *The Hurt Locker*'s specialist is, in effect, an *aficionado* of war is the central concern of this paper, thus allowing it to shed light on the notion of heroism in modern warfare via its representation in Bigelow's film. Furthermore, the focus on an EOD specialist lends itself to an intermedial negotiation with one of Ernest Hemingway's dearest topics, the bullfight. Similar to Hemingway's taurine spectacle, the defusing of a bomb requires a combination of ability and audacity, which reintroduces individual skill to the arena of modern warfare, permitting a juxtaposition which will contribute to the paper's take on the cult of the specialist.

Johannes Mahlknecht
 University of Innsbruck

"Based on Entirely Coincidental Resemblances" – Claims, Disclaimers, and Authenticity in Hollywood Cinema

It is not new that Hollywood filmmakers, when choosing between dramatizing real events in an authentic manner and half-real events in a spectacular manner, tend to opt for the latter. Films that claim to be "based on" or "inspired by" a "true story" (or claim to *be* "a true story") are released on a regular basis, but more regular still are films in which "any similarity to the name, character or history of any person, living or dead, or any actual event is entirely coincidental and unintentional." While the former statements aim at increasing audience interest by establishing a link to "real life," the latter explicitly disclaim such links in order protect producing studios from eventual legal action by individuals who feel misrepresented in the films.

Much has been written about the conflicting relationship between what we consider reality and the cinematic dramatizations of it, but film scholars have given little attention to what the films themselves have to say about their own truth status. The short answer is: not much, except a few short sentences within the film's paratext. As reliable statements about a given films' relationship to reality, claims and disclaimers prove highly inadequate. As practical tools for raising audience interest and / or protection against legal action, they reflect the conflict between Hollywood's interest in and its fear of real-life stories and people.

In my talk I will discuss the functions and narrative relevance of claims and disclaimers, focusing on the following examples: *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (1969, George Roy Hill), *Midnight Express* (1978, Alan Parker) and *Capote* (2005, Bennett Miller). On the one hand, I will discuss how claims and disclaimers mirror prevalent notions about authenticity vs. fictionality in Hollywood filmmaking. On the other hand I will highlight how, by shifting our attention from the viewer's impressions to the producers' own attitudes, they provide incentive for a reevaluation of these notions.

Martina Pfeiler
TU Dortmund

"Let Ahab beware of Ahab": Cultures in Conflict/Conflicting Cultures and the Creative Reception of *Moby Dick* in Film

This paper seeks to explore how Starbuck's and Captain Ahab's conflicting ideas over the fate of the Pequod are aesthetically reproduced in film. It will compare Gregory Peck's *Moby Dick* (1956), Franc Roddam's *Moby Dick* (1998) and Mike Barker's *MobyDick* (2010) in terms of how film as a medium constructs and conveys the personal motifs and reasons for their ideological conflict based on Herman Melville's *Moby Dick; or, The Whale* (1850). It will argue

that the consequences of the outcome of the personal conflict between the God-fearing, Nantucket-bound Quaker Starbuck and the blasphemous, monomaniac, global (yet unearthly) Captain Ahab has larger repercussions for the multi-ethnic crew, whose encounter with Ahab's alterity, produces a fraternal bond that foregoes their personal identities and thus contributes to the lethal outcome of the final show-down, their hunt for *Moby Dick*.

With these analytic trajectories employed, the paper seeks to contribute to 20th and 21st centuries debates of cultures in conflict as well as to aesthetic questions concerning audiovisual remediations of Melville's well-known mid-19th century literary plot that dramatizes major conflicts in Western civilization.

Ralph J. Poole
University of Salzburg

"It's called Hazing": The Double Conflict of Sexual Violence against Males in Sports

Sexual abuse against boys and men in sports has rarely been studied, since the majority of harassed and assaulted victims indeed are female. There has been, nevertheless, substantial institutionalized violence against boys in school sports and sports teams, and colleges have a longstanding tradition of ritually hazing freshmen. Films like *The Basketball Diaries* and TV-Series like *Blue Mountain State* have picked up these traditions and practices, approaching this male-on-male violence from radically differing perspectives however, reaching from fictionalized documentary to farcical comedy. The paper attempts to assess a double conflict that reflects the still largely tabooed topic of violence against males in both research and representation: based on viewing the scant research on sexual violence against males from a historical and social perspective, I aim at examining the conflicting ways mainstream visual media have taken up the challenge to represent such undocumented and illicit violence.

Simone Puff
Alpen-Adria Universität Klagenfurt, Austria

Colors in Conflict:
Light vs. Dark Reloaded; or, the Commodification of (Black) Beauty

Picture Beyoncé Knowles, sporting a blond straightened hairdo on the cover of *People* magazine as the Most Beautiful Woman in the World in 2012. Now picture *Dark Girls*, an independent documentary of the same year that features numerous testimonials of darkcomplexioned African American women yearning for light skin. Those two examples demonstrate that the idea of beauty in the United States is inclusive of non-white models only in appearance; in actual fact, it is still a narrowly defined one. Moreover, the "light is right" attitude that African Americans are encouraged to internalize by the media and the American society at large leads to bitter color conflicts within the Black community. "Light vs. Dark" is as much an issue today as it was in the past, except that today an ever increasing multi-billion dollar cosmetics and beauty industry promises to offer cures to what is still presented as undesirable: dark skin. Based on a larger research project this paper looks at the commodification of (Black) female beauty by drawing on examples from magazine advertisements for beauty products that inform the discourse of skin color even in the twentyfirst century.

Christian Quendler
University of Innsbruck

Terminal Cinema: Bertrand Tavernier's *Death Watch* (1980)

In his by now classic narrative theory of film *Du littéraire au filmique* (1988), André Gaudreault describes the narrative system of film as one that is characterized by a competitive antagonism between a monstrator and a narrator. The former may be aligned with theatrical modes of presentation; the latter is closer to literary written narratives. While Gaudreault's theoretical framework is geared towards analyzing the intermedial matrix that informs the development of cinema during the first decades of the twentieth century, this paper will adopt and adapt Gaudreault's approach in order to explore productive tensions in later media revolutions and their aesthetic and institutional repercussions. My main case study will be Bertrand Tavernier's dystopian thriller *Death Watch* (*La mort en direct* 1980), which showcases two narrative modes to orchestrate the film's central conflict between the human right to die in dignity and media sensationalism: an elegiac voice-over narration and the first-person account by the TV journalist Roddy (Harvey Keitel), who has a camera implanted in his eye. My paper will discuss the intricate alignment and cross-mappings of these modes with audiovisual media (film and video), institutional formats (cinema and tv) as well as aesthetic traditions (mainstream and *auteur* cinema).

Gabriele Rippl, Lukas Etter
University of Bern

Media in Conflict? Text-Picture Interactions in Comics

While the often-cited struggle between text and image has been a constant in Western culture for the past 3000 years, comics and other forms of graphic narratives have particularly experimented with this conflict for more than one century. As Hillary Chute and Marianne DeKoven have stressed, text and image do not simply merge in graphic narratives; they remain distinct features, adding to the "cross-discursive" interaction idiosyncratic of comics and graphic novels.

On the basis of visual examples from Art Spiegelman's *Maus* and Jason Lutes' *Berlin*, this paper will explore the ways in which text and picture may complement or dominate each other in graphic narratives. *Berlin* and *Maus* are particularly pertinent examples given that they – two black-and-white comics originally published in series – are written by a single person each. This union of penciller and drawer, while it may seem to strengthen the ligament between drawing and text, does not lead to harmonious coexistence of the two media, but rather adds to the freedom with which the two creative minds could dispose of graphic narratives' storytelling devices such as temporary omission of image, temporary omission of image, superposition or juxtaposition of the two, letters with iconic quality.

Bryn Skibo
University of Geneva:

The relationship between conflict and aesthetic production in Wolfe's *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*

The residual mental image of the American 1960's is one of social, historical and cultural conflict; it was an era marked by "manners and morals:" the Civil, Racial and Sexual Rights movements, the death of god and the military and the birth of atheism and the drug culture. Literature was not spared from these conflicts, as ranking novelists fought to retain their position as the

producers of the most influential literary works against the growing influence of journalists and their nonfiction articles for "slick" magazines. Led by Wolfe, Talese, Mailer, Capote and Thompson, the "New Journalists" combined novelistic techniques of social realism with journalism, creating nonfiction that involved the reader like fiction. When struggling novelists had their careers revitalized by their New Journalism-styled works, the balance of cultural influence further shifted towards nonfiction. Wolfe theorizes that this shift stems from the novelists' retreat from realism and towards abstract "novels of ideas," leaving the journalists "the richest terrain of the novel: namely, society, the social tableau, manners and morals;" these writers, in turn, became the neo-Balzacs, the "secretaries of American society." Consequently, an analysis of the relationship between form and content in Wolfe's *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* reveals a symbiotic relationship between conflict and aesthetic production: where "fiction is outstripped" by the reality of social and historical conflict, nonfiction adapts to fill to vacuum.

Agnieszka Soltysik
University of Lausanne

American Cultures and Conflicts: The Visual Strategies of the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars

One of the conventions of the classic American combat film, associated mainly with WWII, is the transformation of a motley group of recruits, divided by cultural and ethnic differences, into a tight military unit of American soldiers. Commercial Vietnam films also generally followed in this trend, often depicting the fraternity among infantry ("grunts") as transcending racial and regional differences. This presentation will focus on the latest American military conflicts, namely in Iraq and Afghanistan, and will examine the representational strategies in several films and two popular cable television series, *Over There* (FX, 2005) and *Generation Kill* (HBO, 2008). How is American national identity depicted in these texts? Do race and ethnicity (and increasingly, gender) create significant tensions between soldiers or are such differences depicted as dissolved by the unifying pressure of a national military culture? I will explore these questions and also address the more theoretical question of how film translates ideological and economic issues into racial and cultural ones in order to render them more visible.

Barbara Straumann
University of Zurich

The Conflict of Voice in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Blithedale Romance*

I would like to propose the following paper as part of a book project in which I focus on female performer voices – speakers, preachers, actresses and singers – in Anglo-American narrative fiction (1845-1934). Taking as my theoretical point of departure Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia and Friedrich Nietzsche's notion of culture as a battleground of conflicting opposites, I will argue that there is a conflict of voice at the centre of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Blithedale Romance* (1852). To be more precise, the text foregrounds a power struggle between the voice of the brilliant feminist performer Zenobia and the voice of the first-person narrator Miles Coverdale. Coverdale's narrative is motivated by his desire – and failure – to read Zenobia, who uses her perpetual performance not only to display her public persona but also to protect her intimate subjectivity. Disturbed by the fact that Zenobia has a desire of her own, Coverdale seeks to tame and suppress the powerful effects of her voice, which continues to haunt him twelve years after her death. In my paper I will trace how the conflict of voice between the dead performer and the haunted narrator is inscribed textually as well as the ways in which this highlights a cultural conflict revolving around the woman's voice.

Alexa Weik von Mossner
University of Fribourg / Rachel Carson Center, Munich

Listening to the Wind:
Cultural Conflict and Identity in Michael Apted's *Thunderheart*

My paper will explore the depiction of cultural conflict in Michael Apted's contemporary western mystery film *Thunderheart* (1992). *Thunderheart* acknowledges from the outset that its portrayal of a fictional Native American community and its struggle for legal, social, and environmental justice "was inspired by events that took place on several Indian reservations during the 1970s." Although it is conceived as a thriller, the film has a documentary's attentiveness to detail, and it was filmed almost entirely on the Pine Ridge Reservation in North Dakota where Apted also shot *Incident at Oglala* (1992), his documentary about the Native American activist and convicted murderer Leonard Peltier. Both films are centrally concerned with political, cultural, and environmental conflicts between Native Americans and US government officials, and the documentary informs the feature film in various and often quite intriguing ways. The added strength of the feature film, I will argue in my paper, is that it introduces into its semi-historical story the fictional character of Ray Levoi, an ambitious young FBI agent who is in denial about the fact that his deceased father was a half-blood Sioux. Aligning viewers with this highly conflicted protagonist, *Thunderheart* invites serious reflection on the ways in which contemporary Indian identities continue to be profoundly circumscribed not only by political and material factors, but also by an ongoing clash of cultures.