UC Santa Barbara
Journal of Transnational American Studies

Title
Contributor Bios

Permalink
https://escholarship.org/uc/item/41j771qp

Journal
Journal of Transnational American Studies, 17(1)

Author
Transnational American Studies, Journal of

Publication Date
2026-09-05

DOI
10.5070/T8.69032

Copyright Information
This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License, available at https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/

eScholarship.org Powered by the California Digital Library
University of California

About the Contributors

BRIDGET BENNETT is Professor of American Literature and Culture at the University of Leeds, UK. She is the recent recipient of a Leverhulme Major Fellowship, which enabled her to write *The Dissenting Atlantic: Archives and Unquiet Libraries, 1776–1865* (LSU Press, 2025). A former Vice Chair of the British Association for American Studies, she has broad interests in transnational US literary culture. These are reflected in her publications, which include "'The Silence Surrounding the Hut': Invisible Slaves and Vanished Indians in *Wieland*," in *Early American Literature* (2018), which was awarded the 2019 Arthur Miller Prize; "Guerrilla Inscriptions: The 1851 Census and Transatlantic Abolition," in *Atlantic Studies* (2020); "Nineteenth-Century Abolition and the Unquiet Library: Transatlantic Print Culture and the Making of the 'Celebrated Philanthropist', Anthony Benezet," in *American Philanthropy at Home and Abroad*, edited by Ben Offiler and Rachel Williams (2022); and "England/New England: A British Quaker and a Fugitive from Slavery Encounter Each Other on a Train, 1850," in *Crossings: Nineteenth-Century American Literature on the Move*, edited by Edward Sugden (2022). Her most recent article is "A Literary Annual of a 'Different Hue': *The Aurora Borealis* and Transatlantic Literary Culture," in *Early American Literature* (2026).

SHAMEEM BLACK is Associate Professor in the School of Culture, History and Language at the Australian National University. She is the author of *Flexible India: Yoga's Cultural and Political Tensions* (Columbia, 2024) and *Fiction Across Borders: Imagining the Lives of Others in Late Twentieth-Century Novels* (Columbia, 2010). Her work in South Asian studies, literary and cultural studies, and gender studies has appeared in *Public Culture*, *Journal of World Literature*, *Contemporary South Asia*, *MFS: Modern Fiction Studies*, and other journals. She is coeditor of *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies.*

BOWEN DU is a doctoral candidate in English at the University of California, Davis. His research interests include settler colonial studies, critical race and ethnic studies, and Asian American literature, and his dissertation examines the connection between the reception of Asian religio-philosophy and Asian racialization in the US.

JONAS FAUST is currently working at the University of Osnabrück's Office of Strategic Planning and Development. Formerly, he worked as program coordinator of the bachelor and master programs at the Heidelberg Center for American Studies. He obtained

his PhD at the University of Heidelberg in 2024 with a dissertation project on the paradigm of prophetic poetry in the works of Allen Ginsberg, funded by a PhD scholarship from the Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes (German Academic Scholarship Foundation). His research interests include the Beat Generation, American transcendentalism, modernism/postmodernism, and the intersections of literature, sociology, and religion. He is the author of *Speaking the Unspeakable: Allen Ginsberg's Paradigm of Prophetic Poetry* (Brill, 2026). Ginsberg, one of the most important and widely read American poets of the twentieth century, depicted himself as the prophet of a new America. Scholars and critics have echoed this self-description and turned prophecy into a key theme of his life, but their understanding of this notion often remains vague and ill-defined. *Speaking the Unspeakable* constructs a flexible definition of prophecy from the poet's own perspective and applies it to his entire work chronologically to capture its developments, idiosyncrasies, and tensions.

JONATHAN van HARMELEN (PhD) is Visiting Assistant Professor in History at Oberlin College. His work, which covers American politics, immigration history, and transnational studies, has appeared in journals including *Pacific Historical Review, Southern California Quarterly, Journal of Transnational American Studies,* and *California History*. He is currently the editor of *Southern California Quarterly*. Along with his academic writing, his articles have appeared in numerous newspapers and publications, including *Los Angeles Review of Books, Zócalo Public Square*, *The New Republic, The Nation,* and *The New York Times*. He is currently completing a book on the role of Congress in the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II.

ALFRED HORNUNG is Research Professor of American Studies and English with special interests in Transnational American Studies and all areas of life writing. These fields have implications for inter- and transdisciplinary methods as well as an extension of American literature and culture beyond the boundaries of the continental United States. In this sense he pursues the transatlantic and transpacific reaches of the classical canon of literary and cultural works from the eighteenth to the twenty-first century and recognizes new authors and new lines of transnational affiliations established by multiple migrations from different parts of the world. In these planetary efforts he cooperates with colleagues in Europe, the Americas, Australia, and China. He has been a long-time general editor of *American Studies: A Monograph Series* on behalf of the German Association of American Studies (GAAS) and is editor in chief of the *Journal of Transnational American Studies* (Stanford).

ALYSSA A. HUNZIKER is Assistant Professor of English at Boston University and affiliate faculty in the American Studies program. Her research and teaching focus on Native American and Indigenous literatures and US empire studies. She is the author of *Histories in Common: Native American Literatures, Extra Archives, and the Indigenous Transpacific* (University of North Carolina Press, 2026). She is at work on a new book project on the Carlisle Indian Industrial School's connections to US colonial projects in the

Philippines and Puerto Rico. Her essays can be found in *American Periodicals*, *American Quarterly*, *College Literature*, *Indigenous Media Ecologies*, *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and the Environment*, *Multi-Ethnic Literatures of the US*, *Settler Colonial Studies*, and *Studies in American Indian Literatures*.

AMIRTHA V. KIDAMBI is an artist whose work transgresses borders of free jazz, punk, noise, electro-acoustic and South Asian devotional music, harnessing subversive sounds and text to challenge hegemony. Through ecstatic and transcendent expression, Kidambi facilitates communal catharsis in the midst of social isolation and despair, utilizing every concert as a meeting and organizing space. Based in Lenapehoking-Brooklyn, Kidambi is a vocalist, improviser, composer, organizer and scholar focused on critical intervention in response to intersecting contemporary crises, in collaboration with innovative musicians including Luke Stewart, Darius Jones, Mary Halvorson, William Parker, and the late Robert Ashley and Muhal Richard Abrams of the AACM. Leading the defiant protest jazz outfit Elder Ones, her work garners critical acclaim from *NPR, Wire*, and others, and tours internationally at venues and festivals including Lincoln Center, Rewire, Big Ears, SESC (Brazil); she has also acted as guest curator at Le Guess Who? Festival. Kidambi hosts *Outernational*, a podcast interviewing socially engaged musicians on the role of music in these times. She is also the composer for Suneil Sanzgiri's anticolonial films, exhibited at MoMA, Toronto International Film Festival, and others. Kidambi holds degrees from CUNY and Columbia University in ethnomusicology, musicology, and vocal performance, and is published in the *Routledge Voice & Identity Reader*, *Wire Magazine,* and *Sound American.* Her research focuses on music and improvisation as a critical social practice, and on decolonization, transnational solidiarities, and collectivity, through history, into the present. Kidambi teaches courses across sonic arts, improvisation, composition, musicology and cultural/critical studies at CUNY Brooklyn College, Bennington College, and The New School. She currently serves on the faculty at Brooklyn College in Sonic Arts. Kidambi has received grants and residencies from Pioneer Works, Roulette, Rockefeller Foundation, Mellon Foundation, Mid-Atlantic Arts, NYFA, EMPAC, Asian Cultural Council, and Jerome Foundation. Kidambi is a Princeton Hodder Fellow, Working Artist Fellow through Pioneer Works, and faculty fellow with Social Practice CUNY. Kidambi has organized with several artist–activist collectives including South Asian Artists in Diaspora, Artists Against Apartheid, and Musicians Against Police Brutality, organizing panels, events, public outreach, and actions in DIY spaces such as Silent Barn as well as institutions including MoMA PS1.

SABINE KIM is a postdoctoral scholar affiliated with the Obama Institute for Transnational American Studies at the University of Mainz, Germany and a comanaging editor of the *Journal of Transnational American Studies*. Her publications include "Haitian Vodou and Migrating Voices" (*Theatre Research International*, 2019); "For the Birds: Bird-Watching as a Form of Ethical Attentiveness" (*Ecology and Life Writing*, ed.

Alfred Hornung and Zhao Baisheng); and *Acoustic Entanglements: Sound and Aesthetic Practice* (Winter Universitätsverlag, 2017). Her current research investigates the production of wealth inequalities with a focus on land theft under settler colonialism, museum collecting in colonial Africa, and the use of courts to challenge narratives of possessive individualism.

GESA MACKENTHUN is Professor Emeritus of American Studies at Rostock University, Germany. Her books include *Embattled Excavations: Colonial and Transcultural Constructions of the American Deep Past* (2021), *Metaphors of Dispossession: American Beginnings and the Translation of Empire* (1997), *Fictions of the Black Atlantic* (2004), and many edited volumes, among them *Decolonizing 'Prehistory': Deep Time and Indigenous Knowledges in North America* (with Christen Mucher, 2021), *Sea Changes: Historicizing the Ocean* (with Bernhard Klein, 2004), *Entangled Knowledge: Scientific Discourses and Cultural Difference* (with Klaus Hock, 2012), and *DEcolonial Heritage: Natures, Cultures and the Asymmetries of Memory* (with Aníbal Arregui, 2017). Her current research deals with representations of the transatlantic history of enclosures, evictions, and ecocide.

AAKASH MITTAL is a multi-instrumentalist, composer, and improviser who has been hailed as "a fiery alto saxophonist and prolific composer" by the *Star Tribune* (Minneapolis) whose work "points toward new possibilities in improvised music" (*Denver Post*). With over one hundred and twenty new works to his name, Mittal's compositions range from the large ensemble piece *Salt March*, that celebrates Gandhi's nonviolent protest action, to his more intimate Awaz Trio album *Nocturne*, that that reimagines Indian night ragas within jazz improvisation. His ever-growing body of work reflects his love of sound, playing with musical convention, and the exploration of hybrid culture. Aakash Mittal's awards and honors include the Chamber Music America/ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming of Contemporary Music (2012), the Herb Albert/ASCAP Young Jazz Composers Award (2013), and the American Institute of Indian Studies Creative and Performing Arts Fellowship (2013). Mittal is currently a Gabriela Lena Frank Creative Academy of Music Fellow. He lives in Brooklyn, New York, with his wife, son, and a collection of tabletop games.

LINA-MARIA MURILLO is Associate Professor in the Department of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at the University of Texas at Austin. Her first book, Fighting for Control: Power, Reproductive Care, and Race in the U.S-Mexico Borderlands (UNCP 2025), examines the histories of reproductive control and violence against Mexican-origin women and how they organized to create spaces of reproductive care and liberation throughout the twentieth century. Murillo's latest article, "Espanta Cigüeñas: Race and Abortion in the U.S-Mexico Borderlands," won the 2023 Catharine Stimpson Prize for Outstanding Feminist Scholarship in Signs: A Journal of Women and Culture in Society. Her research is supported by several grants and fellowships, including from the American Association of University Women (AAUW), American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) and the Ford Foundation.

CATHERINE (CATIE) R. PETERS is an interdisciplinary scholar of the Caribbean whose research centers on empire, Black and Asian diasporas, and the environment. She earned her PhD in American Studies from Harvard University. Her book manuscript *Laboring Neighbors: Afro-Asian Ecologies in the Colonial Caribbean* is a study of the ecologies where people of Asian and African descent lived as neighbors in the nineteenth-century Caribbean.

VARUN RANGASWAMY is an improviser, composer, scholar, bassoonist, and Karnāṭak vocalist. Their self-reflexive debut album *REINHERITANCE* has been praised for "creating a mesmerizing circular dialect" (*I Care If You Listen*). As a multifaceted artist, he has performed with such ensembles as International Contemporary Ensemble, Talea Ensemble, and Mivos Quartet in varying capacities as performer and/or composer. Rangaswamy's work, which has been performed across North America and Europe, explores music's capacity for articulating theoretical insights about history and subjectivity. He engages with the instability of historico-cultural processes—like the formation and reconfiguration of identity—by experimenting with technical convention and testing the limits of language through sound. Originally trained in Karnāṭak music, Rangaswamy has studied mridanga performance with Rajna Swaminathan and vocal performance with B. Balasubrahmaniam. He has earned an MA from UC San Diego and a BM from the Eastman School of Music, both in composition, and is currently completing a second master's degree, in Music and Research, at the Hochschule für Musik Basel, Switzerland.

GREG ROBINSON is Professor of History at l'Université du Québec à Montréal. He is the author of several books. His first book, *By Order of the President: FDR and the Internment of Japanese Americans* (Harvard University Press, 2001) uncovers President Franklin Roosevelt's central involvement in the wartime confinement of one hundred twenty thousand Japanese Americans. His book, *A Tragedy of Democracy: Japanese Confinement in North America* (Columbia University Press, 2009), winner of the 2009 History Book Prize of the Association for Asian American Studies, examines the mass confinement of ethnic Japanese in transnational context. His third book, *After Camp: Portraits in Midcentury Japanese American Life and Politics* (University of California Press, 2012), which won the Caroline Bancroft History Prize, centers on postwar resettlement and coalitions between Japanese Americans and other minorities. He the coeditor of *John Okada* (University of Washington Press, 2018), winner of a 2019 American Book Award. His most recent book is the coauthored article collection *The Unknown Great: Stories of Japanese Americans at the Margins of History* (University of Washington Press, 2024). He writes regularly for the San Francisco *Nichi Bei* and the blog *Discover Nikkei*.

JOHN RUFO is Assistant Professor of English at Wayne State University, beginning Fall 2026. Rufo's research focuses on the aesthetics of social movements in the Americas, with special consideration given to the relationship between abolition, Black feminism,

and internationalism. Their first book project is forthcoming from Cambridge University Press in the series Cambridge Elements in Feminism and Contemporary Critical Theory, and scholarship has appeared, or will appear, with Diacritics and Social Text. They are currently at work on a series of longer research projects provisionally titled "Un-American Studies."

AIKO TAKEUCHI-DEMIRCI is the Liu-Dang Lecturer in Undergraduate Teaching in the School of Humanities and Sciences at Stanford University. She is in charge of the IR Capstone requirement and also teaches in the COLLEGE (Civic, Liberal, and Global Education) Program. Previously, she was a faculty member and Co-Director of the Center for Asian Studies at Koç University (Istanbul). She received her PhD and MA in American Studies from Brown University, and MA and BA from the University of Tokyo. Her book, *Contraceptive Diplomacy: Reproductive Politics and Imperial Ambitions in the United States and Japan* (Stanford University Press, 2018), won the John Whitney Hall Book Prize from the Association for Asian Studies.

CHRISTOPHER P. WILSON is Professor of English, Emeritus, at Boston College. He is the author of four books on American literature and culture, including *Cop Knowledge: Police Power and Cultural Narrative in 20th-Century America* (2000). He has published essays on American literature and contemporary nonfiction in *Raritan*, *American Literature*, *American Quarterly*, *MELUS*, and *The Journal of American Studies*. In 2024, he published the third edition of *Reading Narrative Journalism*, an introductory digital classroom text, available at https://narrativejournalism.bc.edu/.