VI INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON

THE AMERICAN LITERARY AND CULTURAL WEST

Local/Regional Perspectives and Global Imaginings

LITERATURE
CULTURE
PLACE
MOVEMENT
CONNECTIONS
BEYOND BORDERS

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

40.7128° N
74.0060° W
34.0522° N
118.2437° W
41.6561° N
-0.8773° W

PLACES
STORIES
PEOPLE
IDEAS
HORIZONS



Vitoria-Gasteiz
Faculty of Arts
5–7 October 2026

Vitoria-Gasteiz
Facultad de Letras
5–7 Octubre 2026

Vitoria-Gasteiz
Letren Fakultatea
2026ko urriaren 5–7

UPV EHU Universidad del País Vasco Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea
UPV EHU Facultad de Letras Letren Fakultatea Faculty of Arts
EUSKO JAURLARITZA GOBIERNO VASCO
GOBIERNO DE ESPAÑA MINISTERIO DE CIENCIA, INNOVACIÓN Y UNIVERSIDADES
REWEST

hit the

CONTENTS

PROGRAM

Conference program
5–7 October 2026 · Faculty of Arts, Vitoria-Gasteiz

PLENARY LECTURES

Andrea Jaurrieta
'Nina': una deconstrucción feminista del western
Plenary · 5 Oct, 10:00–11:00

Stefano Rosso
On the Splendors and Miseries of the Italian Western
Plenary · 5 Oct, 15:00–16:00

Anthony Macías
America's Western Music: Cowboys, Country, and Outlaws
Plenary · 6 Oct, 11:00–12:00

Kalenda Eaton
"With the rest they can take their time": Black Western Spaces and the Freedom of Power
Plenary · 7 Oct, 12:00–13:00

PAPERS

01. **Jon Alkorta Martiatu (University of the Basque Country, EHU)**
Ursula Le Guin's *Earthsea* and Its Place in the American West's Literary Landscape
Panel 4 · 5 Oct, 12:30–13:30

02. **Adrián Arana-Armesto (University of the Basque Country, EHU)**
Autoimmune Communities in *Streets of Laredo*: The Crisis of the Frontier
Panel 10 · 5 Oct, 18:00–19:00

03. **Olatz Aranceta-Reboredo (UPF-Centre for Animal Ethics) and Ane B. Ruiz-Lejarcegui (University of the Basque Country, EHU)**
The "Lesser Species" of *Westworld*: Biopolitics and Interspecies Coexistence in the Manufacturing of the Old West
Panel 11 · 6 Oct, 09:00–10:30

04. **Sergio Badules Rodríguez (Complutense University of Madrid)**
Hit the road Jack! El viaje hacia el Oeste como parámetro configurador de la americanidad "*En la carretera*"
Panel 17 · 6 Oct, 17:30–18:30

05.**Isabel M. Barrios Vicente (International University of La Rioja, UNIR)**
Cowboys in the 'Verse: Reconfiguring Frontier Myth through Transcultural Hybridity in *Firefly*
Panel 9 · 5 Oct, 18:00–19:00

06.**Naiara Berganzo-Besga (Independent Researcher)**
Expansionism and the Civilising Myth: The Legacy of Colonial American Discourses in Octavia E. Butler's *Xenogenesis*
Panel 8 · 5 Oct, 17:00–18:00

07.**Susan Bernardin (Oregon State University)**
By Design: Watermarks and Land Languages in Woody, Feddersen, and Lavadour
Panel 5 · 5 Oct, 16:00–17:00

08.**Alfonso Berroya Elosua (University of the Basque Country, EHU)**
Beyond the Frontier: The American West as a Visual Language in Contemporary Concept Art
Panel 12 · 6 Oct, 09:00–10:30

09.**Gorka Braceras Martinez (University of the Basque Country, EHU)**
Redefining Myths through Black Metal's Journey to the American West
Panel 14 · 6 Oct, 12:00–13:00

10.**Facundo Agustín Briz Rojas (University of the Basque Country, EHU)**
On the Brink of Extinction: The Agrilogistic Foundations of The Frontier Myth and Species Endangerment in John William's *Butcher's Crossing* (1960)
Panel 11 · 6 Oct, 09:00–10:30

11.**Jannis Buschky (University of Konstanz)**
The Petro- and Postmodern West in Upton Sinclair's *Oil!* (1926-27)
Panel 16 · 6 Oct, 15:00–16:30

12.**Juan Fernando Camacho Sánchez (University of Extremadura)**
"Hell, there's no God in Mexico": The godless *Blood Meridian*
Panel 19 · 7 Oct, 09:30–10:30

13.**Anne Carrica (The University of New Mexico)**
Mythic Sheepherders: Racial Capital & Basque Diaspora
Panel 3 · 5 Oct, 12:30–13:30

14.**Nancy S. Cook (The University of Montana, Missoula)**
Fatal Attractions: The Slow Violence of Land Barons Running Amok in the New West
Panel 21 · 7 Oct, 11:00–12:00

15.**Maja Daniel (University of the Basque Country, EHU)**
The Frontier Reborn: Regenerative Primitivism in Jack London's *The Scarlet Plague*
Panel 2 · 5 Oct, 11:30–12:30

16.**Kelly Dennis (University of Connecticut)**
Covert Landscapes: Trevor Paglen's Satellite and Limit Telephotography of the American West
Panel 18 · 6 Oct, 17:30–18:30

17.**David Fenimore (University of Nevada)**
Those Wide Open Sexy Spaces: 'Land Porn' in the popular Western from Zane Grey to Taylor Sheridan's "Yellowstone"
Panel 7 · 5 Oct, 17:00–18:00

18.**Amaya Fernández Menicucci (University of the Basque Country, EHU)**
Empty Landscapes and Haunted Homesteads: The Convergence of Western and Weird Fiction in Victor LaValle's *Lone Women* (2023)
Panel 7 · 5 Oct, 17:00–18:00

19.**Olga Fernández Vicente (University of the Basque Country, EHU)**
Paralysed Homes and Open Frontiers: Joyce, Cather, and Transatlantic Geographies of Displacement
Panel 22 · 7 Oct, 11:00–12:00

20.**Melanie Frey (University of Konstanz)**
"All was open country, rolling and vast": Western landscapes in early automobile literature
Panel 16 · 6 Oct, 15:00–16:30

21.**Ariadna García Carreño (University of Almería)**
Redefining the "Regional": Suicide and Californian Poetry
Panel 1 · 5 Oct, 11:30–12:30

22.**Patricia García Santos (University of Córdoba)**
Babel in the West: The Right to Opacity in *Blood Meridian*
Panel 19 · 7 Oct, 09:30–10:30

23.**Patricia García Santos (University of Córdoba) and Adrián Arana-Armesto (University of the Basque Country, EHU)**
An Act of Confession is an Act of Betrayal: Deathbed Disclosure, Secrecy, and Community in *Blood Meridian*
Panel 12 · 6 Oct, 09:00–10:30

24.**Carmen Gil Fombellida (University of the Basque Country, EHU)**
El Western en la narrativa del exilio vasco republicano de 1939: *Cualquiera que os dé muerte*, de Cecilia G. de Guilarte
Panel 3 · 5 Oct, 12:30–13:30

25.**Eider Gómez Sainz (University of the Basque Country, EHU)**
The West's Shadow: The Korean War's Legacy in Angela Mi Young Hur's *Folklorn*
Panel 2 · 5 Oct, 11:30–12:30

26.**Jesús Ángel González López (University of Cantabria)**
Where is the West in Brazilian (Post-)Westerns?
Panel 15 · 6 Oct, 15:00–16:30

27.**Manuel González de la Aleja Barberán (University of Salamanca)**
The Western Code. Heroes and Bullies
Panel 17 · 6 Oct, 17:30–18:30

28.**Maite Goñi Indurain (University of the Basque Country, EHU) and Oier Quincoces (University of the Basque Country, EHU)**
Cowboys don't cry. La desmitificación del vaquero en *The Rider* (2018) y *Extraña de forma de vida* (2023)
Panel 22 · 7 Oct, 11:00–12:00

29.**Richard Jorge (University of the Basque Country, EHU)**
Western Liminality in American and Irish Nineteenth-Century Gothic Settings: E.A. Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" (1839) and J.S. Le Fanu's "A Chapter in the History of a Tyrone Family" (1839)
Panel 20 · 7 Oct, 9:30–10:30

30.**William R. Handley (University of Southern California)**
Naturalizing and Exposing the Settler Colonial Landscape
Panel 21 · 7 Oct, 11:00–12:00

31.**Salma Hmata Fahmi (Complutense University of Madrid)**
(Un)Conventional Cowboys: An Exploration of Old West Myths in David Lynch's *The Cowboy and the Frenchman* (1988)
Panel 15 · 6 Oct, 15:00–16:30

32.**Sammy Holden (Edge Hill University)**
Spider Dreams and The Colonial Imaginary in *Red Dead Redemption 2*
Panel 18 · 6 Oct, 17:30–18:30

33.**Irati Jiménez-Pérez (University of the Basque Country, EHU)**
Manifest Domination: Nonhuman Animals and the Ideology of Western Expansion
Panel 11 · 6 Oct, 09:00–10:30

34.**Silvia Martínez-Falquina (University of Zaragoza)**
Relational Wests: Kinship, Materiality, and More-Than-Human Worlds in Louise Erdrich's *Python's Kiss*
Panel 5 · 5 Oct, 16:00–17:00

35.**Megan McGilchrist (Independent Scholar)**
Echoes of Antiquity: Reflections on Classical Influence on Some Nineteenth-Century American Women Writers of the West
Panel 20 · 7 Oct, 09:30–10:30

36.**Natalia Medina Martínez (University of Alcalá)**
The River That Remains: Myth, Materiality, and Emotional Breakdown in Joan Didion's *Run River* (1963)
Panel 6 · 5 Oct, 16:00–17:00

37.**Natalia Mirón-Florido (University of the Basque Country, EHU)**
White Skin, Blue Masks: Racism and the Disavowal of Indigenous Resistance in the American West in *Avatar: Fire and Ash* (2025)
Panel 13 · 6 Oct, 12:00–13:00

38.**Antoni Monserrat Ferrer (University of the Basque Country, EHU)**
Lone Justice Revisited: The West of Maria McKee
Panel 10 · 5 Oct, 18:00–19:00

39.**Juan Ignacio Oliva (University of La Laguna)**
"Los sitios derramados que habité": Interspecific Imaginaries in Tino Villanueva's Poetic Oeuvre
Panel 1 · 5 Oct, 11:30–12:30

40.**Marek Paryz (University of Warsaw)**
The Western as an Inspiration in Polish Music
Panel 14 · 5 Oct, 12:00–13:00

41.**María Pérez López de Heredia (University of the Basque Country, EHU)**
La mirada traductora de un fotógrafo en el Oeste: *In the American West*, de Richard Avedon (1985)
Panel 12 · 6 Oct, 9:00–10:30

42.**Rimika Singhvi (IIS University, Jaipur) and Gunja Patni (Amity University Rajasthan)**
Beyond the Frontier: Ecological Belonging and the New West in Richard Powers' *The Overstory*
Panel 6 · 5 Oct, 16:00–17:00

43.**Tamara Rojo-Castro (University of the Basque Country, EHU)**
Roads to Safety, Roads to Kinship: Rethinking Family in *Santiago's Road Home*
Panel 8 · 5 Oct, 17:00–18:00

44.**Ane B. Ruiz-Lejarcegui (University of the Basque Country, EHU)**
Towards a New Frontier: James S. A. Corey's *Cibola Burn* as a Science Fiction Western
Panel 9 · 5 Oct, 18:00–19:00

45.**Miguel Sanz Jiménez (Complutense University of Madrid)**
"After all, they're white men like myself": Translating Otherness in British comics *Wells Fargo & Pony Express*
Panel 13 · 6 Oct, 12:00–13:00

46.**Timothy Scheie (Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester)**
The New Wave and its Double: Godard's *Breathless* and the Western
Panel 15 · 6 Oct, 15:00–16:30

47.**Irene Velasco Conde (University of Salamanca)**
"I've Been Seeing the Past in one Eye and the Present in the Other": Challenging the Memory, Time and Space of the American West in Shin'ichirō Watanabe's *Cowboy Bebop*
Panel 4 · 5 Oct, 12:30–13:30

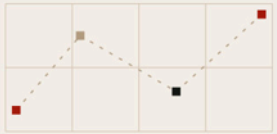
PLENARY ROUND TABLE

Susan Bernardin (Oregon State University), Kalenda Eaton (University of Oklahoma), Marek Paryz (University of Warsaw) and David Río Raigadas (University of the Basque Country, EHU)
Teaching Western American Literature and Culture: Transnational Perspectives
Plenary round table · 6 Oct, 16:30–17:30

OCTOBER 5

MORNING

2026



09:00-09:30 — **REGISTRATION** — Faculty of Arts (Hall)

09:30-10:00 — **OPENING** — Faculty of Arts (Aula Magna)

10:00-11:00 — PLENARY LECTURE

‘NINA’ UNA DECONSTRUCCIÓN FEMINISTA DEL WESTERN

ANDREA JAURRIETA

Chair: Ángel Chaparro Sainz — Faculty of Arts (Aula Magna)

11:00-11:30 — **COFFEE BREAK** — Faculty of Pharmacy

11:30-12:30 — PARALLEL SESSIONS

PANEL 1

Faculty of Arts · Aula Magna

Chair: Irati Jiménez-Pérez

Ariadna García Carreño (Universidad de Almería): Redefining the “Regional”: Suicide and Californian Poetry

Juan Ignacio Oliva (Universidad de La Laguna): ‘Los sitios derramados que habité’: Interspecific Imaginaries in Tino Villanueva’s Poetic Oeuvre

PANEL 2

Faculty of Arts · Salón de Grados

Chair: Raúl Montero Gilete

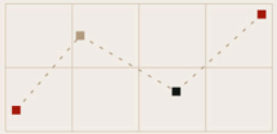
Eider Gómez Sainz (EHU): The West’s Shadow: The Korean War’s Legacy in Angela Mi Young Hur’s *Folklorn*

Maja Daniel (EHU): The Frontier Reborn: Regenerative Primitivism in Jack London’s *The Scarlet Plague*

OCTOBER 5

MIDDAY

2026



12:30-13:30 — PARALLEL SESSIONS

PANEL 3

Faculty of Arts · Aula Magna

Chair: Tamara Rojo-Castro

Anne Carrica (University of New Mexico): Mythic Sheepherders: Racial Capital & Basque Diaspora

Carmen Gil Fombellida (EHU): El Western en la narrativa del exilio vasco republicano de 1939: *Cualquiera que os dé muerte*, de Cecilia G. de Guilarte

PANEL 4

Faculty of Arts · Salón de Grados

Chair: Naiara Berganzo-Besga

Jon Alkorta Martiartu (EHU): Ursula Le Guin's *Earthsea* and Its Place in the American West's Literary Landscape

Irene Velasco Conde (Universidad de Salamanca): "I've Been Seeing the Past in One Eye and the Present in the Other": Challenging the Memory, Time and Space of the American West in Shin'ichirō Watanabe's *Cowboy Bebop* (カウボーイビバップ)."

13:30-15:00 — LUNCH — Faculty of Pharmacy

15:00-16:00

PLENARY LECTURE

ON THE SPLENDORS AND MISERIES OF THE ITALIAN WESTERN

STEFANO ROSSO

Chair: David Río Raigadas

Faculty of Arts (Aula Magna)

OCTOBER 5

AFTERNOON

2026

16:00-17:00

PARALLEL SESSIONS

PANEL 5

Faculty of Arts · Aula Magna

Chair: Amaya Fernández Menicucci

Silvia Martínez-Falquina (Universidad de Zaragoza): Relational Wests: Kinship, Materiality, and More-Than-Human Worlds in Louise Erdrich's *Python's Kiss*

Susan Bernardin (Oregon State University): By Design: Watermarks and Land Languages in Woody, Feddersen, and Lavadour

PANEL 6

Faculty of Arts · Salón de Grados

Chair: Adrián Arana-Armesto

Rimika Singhvi (IIS deemed to be University). Jaipur (Rajasthan, India) **& Gunja Patni** (Amity University): Beyond the Frontier: Ecological Belonging and the New West in Richard Powers' *The Overstory*

Natalia Medina Martínez (Universidad de Alcalá): The River That Remains: Myth, Materiality, and Emotional Breakdown in Joan Didion's *Run River* (1963)

17:00-18:00

PARALLEL SESSIONS

PANEL 7

Faculty of Arts · Aula Magna

Chair: Jon Alkorta Martiartu

David Fenimore (University of Nevada): Those Wide Open Sexy Spaces: 'Land Porn' in the popular Western from Zane Grey to Taylor Sheridan's "Yellowstone"

Amaya Fernández Menicucci (EHU): Empty Landscapes and Haunted Homesteads: The Convergence of Western and Weird Fiction in Victor LaValle's *Lone Women* (2023)

PANEL 8

Faculty of Arts · Salón de Grados

Chair: Martin Simonson

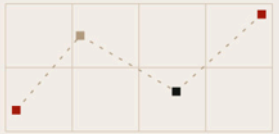
Tamara Rojo-Castro (EHU): Roads to Safety, Roads to Kinship: Rethinking Family in *Santiago's Road Home*

Naiara Berganzo-Besga (Independent Researcher): Expansionism and the Civilizing Myth: The Legacy of American Colonial Discourses in Octavia E. Butler's *Xenogenesis*

OCTOBER 5

EVENING

2026



18:00-19:00

PARALLEL SESSIONS

PANEL 9

Faculty of Arts · Aula Magna

Chair: Olatz Aranceta-Reboredo

Isabel M. Barrios Vicente (UNIR) Cowboys in the 'Verse: Reconfiguring Frontier Myth through Transcultural Hybridity in *Firefly*

Ane B. Ruiz-Lejarcegui (EHU): Towards a New Frontier: James S.A. Corey's *Cibola Burn* as a Science Fiction Western

PANEL 10

Faculty of Arts · Salón de Grados

Chair: Eider Gómez Sainz

Adrián Arana-Armesto (EHU): Autoimmune Communities in *Streets of Laredo*: The Crisis of the Frontier

Toni Monserrat (EHU): *Lone Justice* Revisited: The West of Maria McKee

20:00

Guided City Tour / Visita guiada a la ciudad

8pm. Gathering place will be in Plaza de la Virgen Blanca next to the vegetated letters.
This activity is free and you do not need to register.

OCTOBER 6

MORNING

2026

09:00-10:30 PARALLEL SESSIONS

PANEL 11

Faculty of Arts · Aula Magna

Chair: Ane B. Ruiz-Lejarcegui

Olatz Aranceta-Reboredo (UPF-CAE) **& Ane B. Ruiz-Lejarcegui** (EHU): The “Lesser Species” of *Westworld*: Biopolitics and Interspecies Coexistence in the Manufacturing of the Old West

Irati Jiménez-Pérez (EHU): Manifest Domination: Nonhuman Animals and the Ideology of Western Expansion

Facundo Briz Rojas (EHU): On the Brink of Extinction: The Agrilogistic Foundations of The Frontier Myth and Species Endangerment in John William’s Butcher’s *Crossing* (1960)

PANEL 12

Faculty of Arts · Salón de Grados

Chair: Olga Fernández Vicente

María Pérez López de Heredia (EHU): “La mirada traductora de un fotógrafo en el Oeste: *In the American West*, de Richard Avedon (1985)

Alfonso Berroya Elosúa (EHU): Beyond the Frontier: The American West as a Visual Language in Contemporary Concept Art

Patricia García Santos (Universidad de Córdoba) & **Adrián Arana-Armesto** (EHU): An Act of Confession is an Act of Betrayal: Deathbed Disclosure, Secrecy, and Community in *Blood Meridian*

10:30-11:00 COFFEE BREAK — Faculty of Pharmacy

11:00-12:00 PLENARY LECTURE

AMERICA’S WESTERN MUSIC: COWBOYS, COUNTRY, AND OUTLAWS

ANTHONY MACÍAS

Chair: Amaia Ibarraran Bigalondo

Faculty of Arts (Aula Magna)

OCTOBER 6

MIDDAY & AFTERNOON

2026



12:00-13:00 PARALLEL SESSIONS

PANEL 13

Faculty of Arts · Aula Magna

Chair: David Río Raigadas

Natalia Mirón-Florido (EHU): White Skin, Blue Masks: Racism and the Disavowal of Indigenous Resistance in the American West in *Avatar: Fire and Ash* (2025)

Miguel Sanz Jiménez (Universidad Complutense de Madrid): 'After All, they're white men like myself': Translating Otherness in British comics *Wells Fargo & Pony Express*

PANEL 14

Faculty of Arts · Salón de Grados

Chair: Ángel Chaparro Sainz

Marek Paryz (University of Warsaw): The Western as an Inspiration in Polish Music

Gorka Braceras Martínez (EHU): Redefining Myths through Black Metal's Journey to the American West

13:00-15:00 LUNCH — Faculty of Pharmacy

15:00-16:30 PARALLEL SESSIONS

PANEL 15

Faculty of Arts · Aula Magna

Chair: Olatz Aranceta-Reboredo

Jesús Ángel González López (Universidad de Cantabria): Where is the West in Brazilian (Post-)Westerns?

Timothy Scheie (University of Rochester): The New Wave and its Double: Godard's Breathless and the Western

Salma Hmata Fahmi (Universidad Complutense de Madrid): (Un)Conventional Cowboys: An Exploration of Old West Myths in David Lynch's *The Cowboy and the Frenchman* (1988)

PANEL 16

Faculty of Arts · Salón de Grados

Chair: Jannis Buschky

Melanie Frey (University of Konstanz): 'All was open country, rolling and vast': Western landscapes in early automobile literature

Jannis Buschky (University of Konstanz): The Petro-and Postmodern West in *Upton Sinclair 's Oil!* (1926-27)

OCTOBER 6

AFTERNOON & EVENING

2026



16:30-17:30

PLENARY ROUND TABLE

TEACHING WESTERN AMERICAN LITERATURE AND CULTURE: TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

MAREK PARYZ, DAVID RÍO RAIGADAS, KALENDA EATON & SUSAN BERNARDIN

Chair: David Río Raigadas

Faculty of Arts (Aula Magna)

17:30-18:30

PARALLEL SESSIONS

PANEL 17

Faculty of Arts · Aula Magna

Chair: Jesús Ángel González López

Manuel González de la Aleja Barberán (Universidad de Salamanca): The Western Code. Heroes and Bullies

Sergio Badules Rodríguez (Universidad Complutense de Madrid): *Hit the road Jack!* El viaje hacia el Oeste como parámetro configurador de la americanidad en “On the Road”.

PANEL 18

Faculty of Arts · Salón de Grados

Chair: Tamara Rojo-Castro

Sammy Holden (Edge Hill University): Spider Dreams and The Colonial Imaginary in *Red Dead Redemption 2*

Kelly Dennis (University of Connecticut): Covert Landscapes: Trevor Paglen’s Satellite and Limit Telephotography of the American West

18:45

Guided visit to Bibat Museum, the city’s Archaeology Museum / Visita guiada al Museo de Arqueología Bibat

6:45pm at the Faculty’s main entrance. We will all walk together to the place.
This activity is free and you do not need to register.

OCTOBER 7

MORNING

2026

09:30-10:30

PARALLEL SESSIONS

PANEL 19

Faculty of Arts · Aula Magna

Chair: Naiara Berganzo-Besga

Patricia García Santos (Universidad de Córdoba): Babel in the West: The Right to Opacity in *Blood Meridian*

Juan Fernando Camacho (Universidad de Extremadura): "Hell, there's no God in Mexico": The godless *Blood Meridian*

PANEL 20

Faculty of Arts · Salón de Grados

Chair: Ane B. Ruiz-Lejarcegui

Richard Jorge (EHU): Western Liminality in American and Irish Nineteenth-Century Gothic Settings: E.A. Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" (1839) and J.S. Le Fanu's "A Chapter in the History of a Tyrone Family" (1839)

Megan McGilchrist (Independent Scholar): Echoes of Antiquity: Reflections on Classical Influence on Some Nineteenth-Century American Women Writers of the West

10:30-11:00 COFFEE BREAK

Faculty of Pharmacy

11:00-12:00

PARALLEL SESSIONS

PANEL 21

Faculty of Arts · Aula Magna

Chair: Maja Daniel

Nancy S. Cook (University of Montana): Fatal Attractions: The Slow Violence of Land Barons Running Amok in the New West

William H. Handley (University of Southern California): Naturalizing and Exposing the Settler Colonial Landscape

PANEL 22

Faculty of Arts · Salón de Grados

Chair: Raúl Montero Gilete

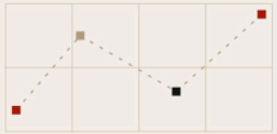
Maite Goñi Indurain (EHU) **y Oier Quincoces** (EHU): *Cowboys don't cry*. La desmitificación del vaquero en *The Rider* (2018) y *Extraña de forma de vida* (2023)

Olga Fernández Vicente (EHU): Paralysed Homes and Open Frontiers: Joyce, Cather, and Transatlantic Geographies of Displacement

OCTOBER 7

CLOSING EVENTS

2026



12:00-13:00

PLENARY LECTURE

KALENDA EATON

Chair: Amaya Fernández Menicucci

Faculty of Arts (Aula Magna)

13:00-14:00

FEDERICO EGUILUZ AWARD CEREMONY

CONFERENCE CLOSING

Faculty of Arts (Aula Magna)

BANQUET

Portalón Restaurant

19:00

Closing Concert: Gonzalo Portugal and Inés Goñi

7pm. Pabellón Universitario del Campus de Álava.
This activity is free and you do not need to register.

ORGANIZED BY

REWEST

EHU
Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea
University of the Basque Country
LETREN FAKULTATEA
FACULTY OF ARTS

EUSKO JAURLARITZA
GOBIERNO VASCO
HEZKUNTZA, UNIBERTSITATE ETA IKERKETA SAILA
DEPARTAMENTO DE EDUCACIÓN, UNIVERSIDADES E INVESTIGACIÓN

MINISTERIO DE CIENCIA, INNOVACIÓN Y UNIVERSIDADES

Cofinanciado por la Unión Europea

AGENCIA ESTATAL DE INVESTIGACIÓN

REWEST

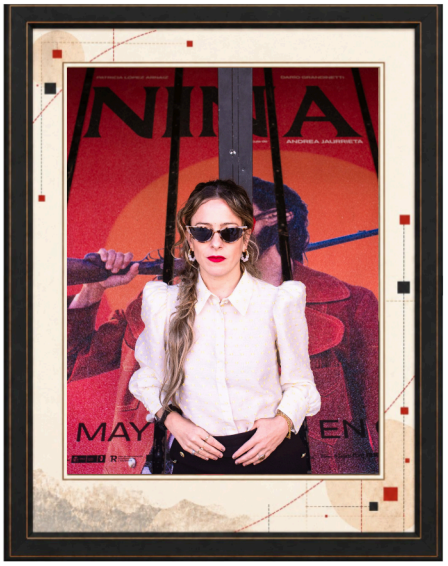
5-7 OCTOBER 2026 Vitoria-Gasteiz · Faculty of Arts

‘Nina’: una deconstrucción feminista del western

Andrea Jaurrieta

Chair: Ángel Chaparro Sainz

Plenary lecture · Monday 5 October, 10:00–11:00 · Aula Magna



En 2024 estrené mi segunda película como directora, *Nina*, un largometraje que parte del western clásico para revisitarlo desde una perspectiva contemporánea y feminista. La película incorpora elementos propios del género -su estructura narrativa, personajes, arquetipos y diversos códigos visuales-, pero los transforma y resignifica para construir una mirada propia.

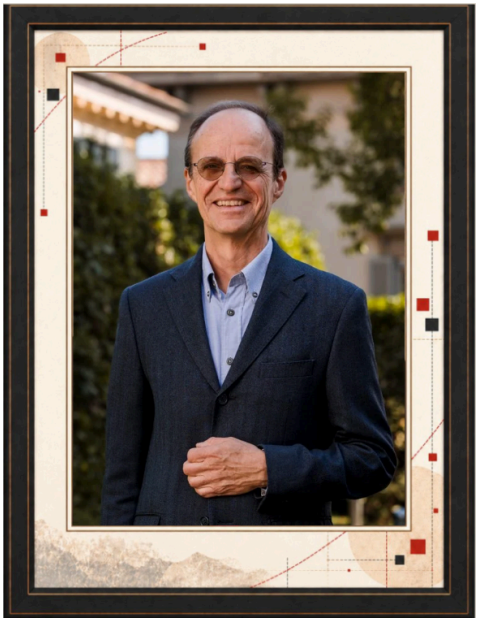
En esta charla compartiré los referentes que inspiraron *Nina* y analizaré la película en diálogo con algunos de los grandes westerns clásicos, comparando sus elementos y las relaciones que establece con el género. También hablaré del proceso de creación y financiación de la película, desde su concepción hasta su llegada a las pantallas, para reflexionar a partir de ella sobre el contexto audiovisual actual.

On the Splendors and Miseries of the Italian Western

Stefano Rosso

Chair: David Río Raigadas

Plenary lecture · Monday 5 October, 15:00–16:00 · Aula Magna



The Italian Western emerged in the nineteenth century within a subordinate relationship to its American counterpart. By the beginning of the twentieth century, Italian popular culture had begun to display signs of greater autonomy, even as practices of literary plagiarism persisted. Despite Fascist anti-Americanism, the 1930s laid the groundwork for Italy's postwar fascination with the Western genre. The most significant expression of this fascination is Tex, the comic series first published in 1948 and still in continuous publication today, with unprecedented commercial success. To understand Italian culture's relationship to the Western genre, we must therefore examine Tex and other comics—perhaps even more closely than the brief heyday of the "spaghetti Western." These works reveal stereotypes that are both enduring and evolving, particularly those connected to Italian political life and the cultural construction of masculinity.

America’s Western Music: Cowboys, Country, and Outlaws

Anthony Macías

Chair: Amaia Ibarraran Bigalondo

Plenary lecture · Tuesday 6 October, 11:00–12:00 · Aula Magna



The country music permutations that developed west of the Mississippi—influenced by cowboy ballads, swing rhythms, jazz improvisations, and rock and roll rebellion—by artists like Gene Autry, Bob Wills, and Waylon Jennings were distinct from the southern origins of the genre. The scholarship on the western component in country and western is written by popular music studies specialists, but how does our understanding of these styles, and the symbolic tension between Texas and Tennessee, deepen when contextualized within western history? Conversely, what new insights about the West can be gleaned from analyzing its distinct musical, and broader cultural production? Guided by these research questions, this presentation argues that country music’s western strain contributed to the national expressive culture, celebrating prototypically American values while promulgating nostalgia and fabricating fantasy, as part of continuing debates over heritage and history. The tale told along this trail is accompanied by (Germanic) accordions, (Hawaiian) steel guitars, (Swiss) yodeling, sharp bow fiddling, southwestern square dancing, and embellished ranch fashion, while speaking to notions such as authenticity, masculinity, and mythology.

“With the rest they can take their time”: Black Western Spaces and the Freedom of Power

Kalenda Eaton

Chair: Amaya Fernández Menicucci

Plenary lecture · Wednesday 7 October, 12:00–13:00 · Aula Magna



At the turn of the twentieth century regions throughout the American west became ideological touchpoints for African Americans. This keynote explores how African Americans reimagined the west through three phases of social development and progress: the Homestead Act, the establishment of autonomous communities, and grassroots political activity.

Centering on Oklahoma as a primary geographical focus, the presentation examines how reimagined “Black space” serves as a critical site for interrogating the boundaries and possibilities of Black freedom. By interlacing archival research and contemporary literary narratives, this talk investigates early Oklahoma’s complex history and its efforts to design itself as a composite state.

01. Ursula Le Guin's *Earthsea* and Its Place in the American West's Literary Landscape

Jon Alkorta Martiatu (University of the Basque Country, EHU)

Panel 4 · Monday 5 Oct, 12:30–13:30 · Salón de Grados

As a writer that incessantly directed her efforts towards raising her readers' awareness of social, racial, and gender issues, American writer Ursula K. Le Guin's fantasy work has been rather overlooked by literary criticism. Thus, the present paper seeks to claim this writer's prominent position as a writer of the American West, as well as proposing her Earthsea saga as a rightful contribution to the literature of the American West. With this in mind, the paper will argue that Le Guin achieves this by combining elements that belong to the more traditional literature of the West, as is the idea of mobility, with some of the more modern proposals made by the regional perspective of the second half of the past century.

02. Autoimmune Communities in Streets of Laredo: The Crisis of the Frontier

Adrián Arana-Armesto (University of the Basque Country, EHU)

Panel 10 · Monday 5 Oct, 18:00–19:00 · Salón de Grados

This paper examines Larry McMurtry's *Streets of Laredo* (1993) from the point of view of Community Studies. It reevaluates the crisis facing the American frontier at the beginning of the twentieth century by analyzing the kinds of belonging that persist after the decline of the social systems linked to the Old West. I claim that McMurtry undermines the foundational myths of the West by showing that the communities that once supported frontier expansion were fragile, exclusionary, and prone to self-destruction. To make this argument, the analysis situates the novel in discussions of imagined communities, as well as operative and inoperative forms of belonging and autoimmune political structures. Drawing on Community Studies scholars, the paper examines how the fading comradeship of the Texas Rangers, the Parker family's insecure domesticity, the multiple forms of mobility exhibited by Famous Shoes, and Joey Garza's extreme isolation illustrate different models of communal formation. These different models show that the community in the novel rests on unstable attachments which are constantly at risk from violence. Streets of Laredo presents the American West as an insecure imagined community whose efforts to preserve itself often reproduce the conditions that lead to its breakdown. It does so by addressing bodily fragmentation, liminality, and capitalist modernization.

Keywords: Community Studies; Old West; Operative Communities; Imagined Communities; Borderlands.

03. The “Lesser Species” of *Westworld*: Biopolitics and Interspecies Coexistence in the Manufacturing of the Old West

Olatz Aranceta-Reboredo (UPF-Centre for Animal Ethics) and Ane B. Ruiz-Lejarcegui (University of the Basque Country, EHU)

Panel 11 · Tuesday 6 October, 09:00–10:30 · Aula Magna

This paper examines how the first two seasons of *Westworld* (2016-2022) represent nonhuman animals in its reproduction of the myth of the American Old West, and questions the commonly held assumption that the show dismantles human exceptionalism. In this neoWestern, the titular theme park’s immersive experience provides incoming guests with simplified, commercial narratives that adhere to popular culture interpretations of the West and the Frontier. Westworld is populated with multiple artificial species handled by the “Livestock Management” department. These species include anthropomorphic hosts and other animal hosts, which are central to the settler-colonial frontier-making of the Old West. This paper interprets the park’s carefully designed illusion as an assemblage of “multispecies” agents that collaborate in the co-creation of the West, where every host fulfills predetermined narrative roles to add verisimilitude to guests’ experience. Research often praises the show’s discussions on sentience and its alleged dissolution of the human/nonhuman ontological boundary. Indeed, there seems to be a selective expansion of moral consideration that includes some non-human entities—the anthropomorphic hosts. However, little attention has been given to the underlying anthropocentric lens through which different species—particularly, other animal hosts—are portrayed. In order to exemplify such shortcomings, we will analyze the biopolitics of regimes of animal management that enforce pre-existing human-animal relationships required for immersion within the Western imaginary. These practices are ingrained in the park’s socio-ecological order and occur regardless of the participation of guests. We will also explore the implications of preserving animals and animality within the park, questioning whether they serve as post-extinction, tailored techno-zoological archives of wilderness and colonial fantasies of the West. Ultimately, we argue that the show fails to question the domination of other species and to adopt an ethical posthumanist viewpoint towards hosts beyond anthropomorphic non-humans.

Keywords: Biopolitics; Critical Animal Studies; Old West; *Westworld*; Anthropocentrism.

04. *Hit the road Jack!* El viaje hacia el Oeste como parámetro configurador de la americanidad "*En la carretera*"

Sergio Badules Rodríguez (Complutense University of Madrid)

Panel 17 · Tuesday 6 October, 17:30–18:30 · Aula Magna

A lo largo de la obra de Jack Kerouac, que es considerablemente extensa, se da una suerte de entrelazamiento conceptual entre lo geográfico y lo territorial; lo (auto)biográfico y lo (auto)ficcional; la identidad cultural y la lengua en que se escribe; etc.; siempre a través del viaje hacia el Oeste, hacia la frontera.

Así, el modo fundamental, e, incluso, cabría decir el concepto estructurador de la ficción y de la reflexión *beat*, es el viaje. En el viaje no hay un lugar, sino todos los lugares y, fundamentalmente, el próximo lugar. El viaje, tal y como se nos presenta *En la carretera*, siempre está a punto de comenzar o de recomenzar … siempre está tomando forma.

Por su parte, el territorio es, dado el dinamismo del viaje por carretera, siempre otro y siempre nuevo y es a través de él que podemos vislumbrar algo típicamente americano: el movimiento expansivo y reconfigurador del paisaje y del territorio que opera la frontera. Asistimos aquí a una recreación del viaje de los pioneros, aventureros, *frontier-men* de la época colonial americana: la conquista del Oeste.

En esta recuperación de la figura del pionero, Kerouac desarrolla una actitud particular hacia América y hacia el mundo circundante que lo lleva a rescatar un individualismo pura y formalmente angloamericano que opera, ciertamente, como indagación en la multiplicidad cultural y territorial del continente americano.

Pionero; carretera/camino; frontera, etc., son meros conceptos que integran y vertebran una antropología del viaje que permite comprender la identidad estadounidense mediante la puesta en movimiento de su geografía de Este a Oeste.

En último término, esta antropología viajera, encuadrada en una literatura naturalmente rizomática, actúa siguiendo una línea de fuga bajo la forma de un devenir geográfico siempre en la dirección del Oeste; un devenir-nómada y devenir-americano claves para el estudio de la Norteamérica de mediados de siglo XX.

Keywords: Jack Kerouac; Viaje; Geografía; Frontera; Oeste.

05. Cowboys in the 'Verse: Reconfiguring Frontier Myth through Transcultural Hybridity in *Firefly*

Isabel M. Barrios Vicente (International University of La Rioja, UNIR)

Panel 9 · Monday 5 October, 18:00–19:00 · Aula Magna

Since its release in 2002, *Firefly*—later expanded through the film *Serenity* and the subsequent graphic novels—has generally been discussed as a hybrid of the Western and science-fiction genres. While this generic categorization is certainly accurate, it does not fully account for the series' distinctive reconstruction of the frontier, nor for the cultural logic that sustains its hybrid world. Its fictional history imagines a future shaped by Sino-American political unification, yet its aesthetic language draws on a much broader repertoire of East Asian and Western cultural imaginaries. As this paper argues, *Firefly* reimagines the American frontier myth not simply by combining Western and science-fiction conventions, but by reconfiguring the frontier itself as a transcultural space where social, generic, linguistic, and visual forms of hybridity become mutually constitutive, making the futuristic frontier the product of their interaction. Rather than treating these dimensions independently, the paper examines how they operate reciprocally. In this sense, the fusion of Western and science-fiction conventions is mirrored by the series' blending of Anglo-American frontier mythology with selected Chinese linguistic elements alongside broader pan-East Asian visual and aesthetic signifiers, while the opposition between the technologically centralized Core worlds and the culturally heterogeneous Rim relocates the mythology of the American West into an explicitly post-terrestrial setting. By foregrounding hybridity as the organizing principle of both genre and world-building, the *Firefly* franchise suggests that the mythology of the American west survives not only through faithful reproduction, but through cultural transformation, offering a compelling example of how contemporary popular culture continually reimagines frontier myth through a transgeneric, transnational, and ultimately transcultural exchange that produces a new frontier imaginary.

Keywords: American West; Frontier Myth; Transculturality; Genre Hybridity; World-building; *Firefly*.

06. Expansionism and the Civilising Myth: The Legacy of Colonial American Discourses in Octavia E. Butler's *Xenogenesis*

Naiara Berganzo-Besga (Independent Researcher)

Panel 8 · Monday 5 October, 17:00–18:00 · Salón de Grados

Octavia E. Butler's *Xenogenesis* trilogy revisits foundational narratives of human origins, expansion, and progress through a post-apocalyptic encounter between humanity and the alien Oankali. In the aftermath of a nuclear holocaust, the Oankali rescue the surviving humans and establish control over their reproduction and biological future. This paper explores how Butler reworks American colonial discourses of expansionism, the frontier myth, Manifest Destiny, and the civilising mission by transforming the frontier from a geographical space into a biological and ecological one.

The paper argues that the Oankali encounter reproduces several structures associated with colonial expansion. They enter a devastated world, establish authority over its remaining population, and justify their intervention through their superior biological knowledge and their belief that humanity must be transformed to survive. Their project consequently recalls the civilising mission, in which intervention and domination are legitimised through claims of improvement, progress, and necessity. By transferring these dynamics to the human body and to species reproduction, Butler reveals how the language of survival can become a justification for determining the future of another population.

However, the trilogy does not simply position humanity as the colonised Other or the Oankali as colonial oppressors. Human anthropocentrism, hierarchical thinking, violence, and environmental destruction have contributed to Earth's destruction, while the Oankali offer an alternative based on biological interdependence, adaptation, and ecological awareness. Yet their rejection of hierarchy is itself contradictory, since they exercise extensive control over human bodies and reproduction. Drawing on Edward Said's analysis of the colonial Other and Patrick Wolfe's understanding of settler colonialism as a continuing structure, alongside ecofeminist and posthumanist approaches, this paper examines this tension between ecological knowledge and colonial authority.

The emergence of the Human-Oankali hybrid species nevertheless opens a more hopeful possibility. Rather than returning to an unchanged humanity or simply reproducing Oankali forms of authority, hybridisation creates a new mode of existence grounded in interdependence and biological exchange. Butler therefore transforms the frontier from a space of conquest into a space of encounter and mutual transformation, suggesting that a viable future may depend on moving beyond both anthropocentric domination and the coercive logic of the civilising mission towards a more ecological and relational way of living.

Keywords: the Civilising Myth; the Frontier Myth; Decolonialism; Posthumanism; Ecofeminism.

07. By Design: Watermarks and Land Languages in Woody, Feddersen, and Lavadour

Susan Bernardin (Oregon State University)

Panel 5 · Monday 5 October, 16:00–17:00 · Aula Magna

In his June 2025 presidential memo, "Stopping Radical Environmentalism to Generate Power for the Columbia River Basin," Donald Trump withdrew from the 2023 milestone "Resilient Columbia Basin Agreement" between federal agencies, Oregon and Washington, four Columbia River Basin Tribal Nations, and environmental organizations. For generations, Tribal Nations have worked to restore salmon to a river once storied for their abundance, a challenge made manifest by hydroelectric dams such as The Dalles Dam, which submerged the spectacular Wyam, or Celilo Falls, a significant fishing, trading, cultural, and ceremonial hub. Former Oregon poet laureate Elizabeth Woody (Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, also Yakama, Wasco, and Diné) writes that "the unconscionable drowning of Wyam . . . rent a multi-millennial relationship of a people to a place." Yet throughout her poetry and essays, Woody surfaces the continuing story of both Indigenous resistance and resilient kinship with the Columbia River Basin. In doing so, she joins Joe Feddersen (Colville) and James Lavadour (Walla Walla; Confederated Tribes of Umatilla)—prominent landscape artists whose ancestral homelands include and are now claimed by Oregon and Washington—in offering deeply place-based work whose meanings move far beyond the Pacific Northwest. Their poems, prints, and paintings among other media offer a dazzling affirmation of Indigenous continuance in homelands that are but will never be "the American West." These artists recognize but radically reframe imposed and violent imprints on the land such as train tracks, tire prints, and hydroelectric dam infrastructures. They do so in part through their engagement with Indigenous visual languages of basket design and beadwork, petroglyphs and petrographs. Remembering the Columbia River Basin and its relations in work that abounds with persistent presence across generations of removals, catastrophic losses, and settler occupations, these artists foster active, ongoing relationships with ancestors and ancestral lands. By design, they answer Muscogee scholar Laura Harjo's question: "how do we keep relations alive across time and space and difference?"

08. Beyond the Frontier: The American West as a Visual Language in Contemporary Concept Art

Alfonso Berroya Elosua (University of the Basque Country, EHU)

Panel 12 · Tuesday 6 October, 09:00–10:30 · Salón de Grados

The visual mythology of the American West has progressively transcended its historical and geographical origins to become a shared visual language within contemporary popular culture. While its influence has been extensively studied in literature, cinema and video games, less attention has been paid to the mechanisms through which Western visual codes are translated into the practice of contemporary character concept art.

This paper examines how the American West continues to shape character design beyond the boundaries of the Western genre itself. Rather than focusing on direct historical representation, it argues that the Western survives through a transferable visual grammar based on recognisable archetypes, silhouette design, shape language, costume, props and implicit visual storytelling. These principles have become fundamental design tools capable of generating characters that remain culturally legible even when placed within fantasy or speculative settings.

The first part of the presentation outlines the principal visual and narrative characteristics inherited from the Western tradition and relates them to established character design methodologies widely used within the video game industry. These theoretical principles are then illustrated through selected examples drawn from contemporary concept artists and the **ArtStation Wild West Challenge (2018)**, demonstrating how international artistic communities reinterpret Western iconography through fantasy, science fiction and steampunk aesthetics.

The second part presents a practice-based case study centred on the artistic development of **Mistborn: Ashes Project**, analysing how these same design principles informed the conceptualisation of characters for a fantasy universe apparently detached from the historical American frontier. By comparing theoretical frameworks, professional artistic practice and visual production, the paper argues that the American West should no longer be understood merely as a genre, but as a transnational visual language that continues to shape contemporary concept art and video game aesthetics.

Keywords: American West; Character Concept Art; Video Game Design; Visual Culture-

09. Redefining Myths through Black Metal's Journey to the American West

Gorka Braceras Martinez (University of the Basque Country, EHU)

Panel 14 · Tuesday 6 October, 12:00–13:00 · Salón de Grados

The cultural legacy of the mythology of the American West seems to continue permeating different types of cultural representations still in the 21st century. A significant and interesting example of this can be found in the case of the Heavy Metal subgenre known as Black Metal. Originally a music genre born in Norway in the 1990s, it presented a raw and dark version of metal and dealt lyrically with topics such as Satanism, Paganism (sometimes related to right-wing ideologies) and nature. Since then, it has stylistically and lyrically developed to encompass new styles and topics while keeping its essence as a extreme music genre. In the 2010s, some American bands took an unexpected approach and started fusing Black Metal with the mythology and culture of the American West, thus, creating a distinctly Western Black Metal quite separated from the original Norwegian Satanists.

The aim of this paper is to examine how this cultural production transferred from Norway to the American West, that is, to examine how the autochthonous forests and darkness of the north of Europe were abandoned in order to redefine and revisit the foundational myths of the West. For this aim, three Western Black Metal bands and their songs will be analysed so as to see what kind of representations they make regarding the Myth of the West. These bands will be *Dark Watcher*, *Untamed Land* and *Wayfarer* and attention will be paid to some of their lyrics as well as to their iconography. Besides, previously existing cultural productions defining/redifining the Myth of the West, which influenced the music of the three bands, will also be considered, due to the fact that Western cinema and its soundtracks or literature have been hugely important in their perspectives of the Frontier and of the West. Furthermore, it will be argued that while the West and Black Metal could be apparently incompatible, they have, in fact, come together in a quite natural way.

10. On the Brink of Extinction: The Agrilogistic Foundations of The Frontier Myth and Species Endangerment in John William's *Butcher's Crossing* (1960)

Facundo Agustín Briz Rojas (University of the Basque Country, EHU)

Panel 11 · Tuesday 6 October, 09:00–10:30 · Aula Magna

Provoked by the sudden change of environmental conditions, massive extinction is empirically described as a great loss of biodiversity in a given territory. In her nonfiction novel *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History* (2014), Elizabeth Kolbert introduces this unprecedented global event marked by the human species' impact on the biosphere. In concurrence with contemporary revisions of the "Frontier Myth", ecocritical theory problematizes the humanist foundations of species supremacy and imperialism as is the case of Thymothy Morton's *Dark Ecology* (2018). Its logic of coexistence contributes to the deconstruction of the nature-culture divide, describing agrilogistics as the source of land exploitation and wildlife domestication whilst addressing its contributions to patriarchy, inequality and species supremacy. This paper argues that Manifest Destiny reflects anthropocentric tendencies that resonate with the Climate Crisis on a small scale. Subsequently, John Williams' *Butcher's Crossing* (1960) comes to the fore as a relevant literary work that revisits stereotyped perceptions of the West and rejects American Transcendentalism. Not only does this retelling of a nineteenth century buffalo hunt rewrite preconceived assumptions of the Cowboy figure, but it also acknowledges the narrative agency (Iovino; Oppermann, 2012) of nonhuman beings in the American West. Supported by historical accounts such as Andrew C. Isenberg's *The Destruction of the Bison: An Environmental History, 1750-1920* (2000), the virtual annihilation of these native species remains a turning point in U.S natural and cultural history with the potential to reflect on global ecological issues. Contextualized by Richard Slotkin's *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (1973), this analysis of *Butcher's Crossing* intends to address how fiction and nonfiction partake in the development of a discursive narrative that locates agrilogistics at the core of the buffalo/bison hunts, the Westward Expansion and the bigger picture of Climate Change.

Key Words: Sixth Extinction, American West, Anthropocentrism, Buffalo/Bison, Agrilogistics.

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11. The Petro- and Postmodern West in Upton Sinclair's *Oil!* (1926-27)

Jannis Buschky (University of Konstanz)

Panel 16 · Tuesday 6 October, 15:00–16:30 · Salón de Grados

This 20-minute presentation focuses on oil as the source of postmodern aesthetics in western literature. It argues that the early Southern California oil imaginary in Upton Sinclair's novel *Oil!* (1926-27) reconceptualizes the West in a way that anticipates the postmodern. In previous accounts of postmodern Wests, the postmodern manifests in the opening of the West to new female and racial perspectives and the understanding of the West as an international, multiscalar cultural construction [1]. Going beyond claims that the West is a fragmented, incoherent category, this presentation draws on theories of the postmodern by Frederic Jameson and Jean Baudrillard which, broadly speaking, define the postmodern as the totalizing force of capital and the simulation of culture. I propose that premonitions of this conception of postmodernity are directly tied to *Oil!*'s depiction of historical developments in Southern California such as the emerging freeway system, the rise of a new media culture, and oil capitalism. Offering the postmodern as an episteme, a way of knowing the world, which helps map the West in Sinclair's novel, my argument proceeds in three steps. First, I demonstrate that the novel offers oil as all-pervasive capital that permeates a new media culture, which includes Hollywood, real-estate advertising, and even religion. Secondly, I show that oil drives a shift in business away from individual enterprise to massively distributed corporations and international capital. And lastly, I contend that *Oil!*'s consistent focalization of oil capitalists creates a narrative that can never take an outside perspective on the totalizing forces of oil capital. Rather than classifying Sinclair's novel as a fully realized expression of postmodernism, however, the aim of this presentation is to highlight the distinctive ways in which the early Southern California oil imaginary re-thinks the West as an increasingly postmodern environment.

[1] See, respectively, Krista Comer, *Landscapes of the New West: Gender and Geography in Contemporary Women's Writing* (The University of North Carolina Press, 1999); and Neil Campbell, *The Rhizomatic West: Representing the American West in a Transnational, Global, Media Age* (University of Nebraska Press, 2008).

12. “Hell, there’s no God in Mexico”: The Godless *Blood Meridian*

Juan Fernando Camacho Sánchez (University of Extremadura)

Panel 19 · Wednesday 7 October, 09:30–10:30 · Aula Magna

This paper examines the representation of divine absence and metaphysical nihilism in *Blood Meridian* (1985), arguing that Cormac McCarthy constructs a universe in which religious meaning has collapsed and violence emerges as the only enduring law. Indeed, Bret Easton Ellis observes in his introduction to the Suntup Press edition of the novel that *Blood Meridian* offers “the most elaborated vision of hell you will ever encounter” (7: 2021). Set along the U.S.–Mexico border during the mid-nineteenth century, the novel dismantles traditional Western narratives of providence, civilization and moral progress by presenting the frontier as a space defined not by redemption, but by brutality and spiritual emptiness.

Central to this reading is the figure of the infamous Judge Holden, whose philosophical meditations transform war and violence into a metaphysical principle. Rather than functioning merely as an antagonist, Holden operates as an anti-divine presence who replaces Christian morality with a theology of domination and perpetual conflict. His declaration that “war is god” articulates the novel’s inversion of sacred order, wherein violence assumes the role traditionally occupied by divine law. Through close readings of the Judge’s speeches, the novel’s apocalyptic imagery and its persistent invocation of biblical diction, this paper demonstrates how McCarthy reworks religious discourse into a language of cosmic indifference.

At the same time, the paper considers whether the character of the kid represents a fragile form of ethical resistance within this godless landscape. Ultimately, it argues that *Blood Meridian* portrays the borderlands not simply as a historical setting, but as a metaphysical terrain in which the foundations of morality, faith and human meaning are relentlessly destabilized.

13. Mythic Sheepherders: Racial Capital & Basque Diaspora

Anne Carrica (The University of New Mexico)

Panel 3 · Monday 5 October, 12:30–13:30 · Aula Magna

This presentation begins by asking a simple question: what happened to the Basque shepherds in the Southwestern United States? However, this presentation overall seeks to ask greater questions through diaspora, settler colonialism, historical materialism, and ultimately the transformation of Basque identity.

During the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century Basque people immigrated to the Southwestern United States. In leveraging their racial capital, Basques were able to move between Iyko Day's identities of alien capital: alien, settler, and native.

Originally immigrating to the United States for California's Gold Rush, they found better economic opportunities in sheepherding and became known as mythic sheepherders. The sheepherding industry boomed in World War II and labor and immigration laws were changed to allow for more Basque immigrants. Yet cattle replaced sheep and soon the rise of industrialization led to the decline of agriculture forcing the Basque people to either adapt and assimilate to the changing modes of production or return to Europe.

However, those that became Basque Americans show a complex history of a diasporic people. The Basques produced a wealth of cultural expression—interviews, family histories, memoirs, novels that map, narrate, and commemorate the Basques in the greater southwest. The Basque people were originally from a culture of oral traditions and through their diaspora in the United States have moved to memoirs and fictional works. In essence, they transformed from a collective identity to an individualistic one.

The Basque diaspora in the United States allows for a clearer understanding of their identity formation as Basque Americans. Understanding how this community was built, how they have continued, how they remember their pasts, and how they write about their pasts and current lives allows for one way to understand the formation of the Basque American identity.

14. Fatal Attractions: The Slow Violence of Land Barons Running Amok in the New West

Nancy S. Cook (The University of Montana, Missoula)

Panel 21 · Wednesday 7 October, 11:00–12:00 · Aula Magna

Land barons have occupied considerable imaginative space in stories of the west for more than a century, with literature, films, radio and tv seesawing between landowners as heroic protectors of the land and the powerless, or as arrogant, rapacious autocrats. From Owen Wister's novel *The Virginian* (1902) to tv series such as *Bonanza* (1959-1973), *The Virginian* (1962-1971), or *The Big Valley* (1965-1969), to films including *Shane* (1953), *Giant* (1956), *The Missouri Breaks* (1976), *Heaven's Gate* (1980) and *Silverado* (1985), American and international audiences watched land barons protect or destroy people, communities and environments around them. While as a genre, the Western's appeal waned by the late 1980s, rich owners of vast tracts of the west have again captured America's attention in the past decade.

Taylor Sheridan's series *Yellowstone* (2018-2024), along with prequels and a spinoff, continue to dominate viewers' attention. Called by some critics a neo-Western, *Yellowstone* has recycled tropes and storylines from the Western's deep history. More soap opera than cowboy epic, nevertheless when people around the world think of Montana and the contemporary west, it is Sheridan's version they now imagine. Romance writers have capitalized on the show's popularity and now several formula romance series feature hunky and heroic billionaire ranchers. My interest in this resurgence or rehabilitation of the land baron puts these wildly popular texts in conversation with other forms of discourse and representation, from nonfiction works such as Justin Farrell's *Billionaire Wilderness* (2020) and Amy Gamerman's *The Crazies* (2025) to federal documents, public comments, county supervisor meetings minutes, local newspapers, and blogs. It is in the conversation between these varied texts that one sees "the slow violence," in scholar and activist Rob Nixon's terms, now pervasive in small communities in the Rocky Mountain West. Just outside the frame or the tourist's gaze, the land baron fosters "a violence of delayed destruction" (Nixon), radically altering ecosystems, human communities, and economics within and beyond the region.

15. The Frontier Reborn: Regenerative Primitivism in Jack London's *The Scarlet Plague*

Maja Daniel (University of the Basque Country, EHU)

Panel 2 · Monday 5 October, 11:30–12:30 · Salón de Grados

This paper argues that Jack London's *The Scarlet Plague* (1912) reactivates the mythic American West by reversing the traditional direction of the frontier narrative. Rather than wilderness giving way to settlement and civilization, devastated civilization collapses back into wilderness. Future California, particularly the San Francisco Bay Area, becomes a post-urban frontier shaped by mobility, subsistence, conflict, and environmental exposure.

Drawing on Frederick Jackson Turner's conception of the frontier as an encounter between civilization and wilderness, and Richard Slotkin's theory of "regeneration through violence," the paper examines how London transforms social collapse into regenerative primitivism. The destruction of modern -often corrupted- institutions creates new forms of social organization based on survival, territoriality, and collective identity. A naturalist perspective complicates this regeneration by emphasizing disease, bodily vulnerability and environmental reclamation. The return to wilderness is therefore not a voluntary pastoral retreat but the material consequence of civilization's inability to control the forces on which it depends.

Ultimately, *The Scarlet Plague* presents the frontier as a latent condition within modernity. California's ruined landscapes reveal that civilization does not permanently replace wilderness but temporarily overlays it. The novel imagines history as a cyclical movement between settlement, collapse, rewilding, and renewed social formation. The frontier regenerates society, but it does not guarantee progress.

Keywords: Jack London; The Scarlet Plague; American West; Frontier Mythology; Regenerative Primitivism; Rewilding.

16. Covert Landscapes: Trevor Paglen's Satellite and Limit Telephotography of the American West

Kelly Dennis (University of Connecticut)

Panel 18 · Tuesday 6 October, 17:30–18:30 · Salón de Grados

A geographer-turned-artist, Trevor Paglen followed in the footsteps of geological surveyors such as Timothy O'Sullivan and included a reproduction of the Anasazi White House Ruins in a 2010 photographic diptych entitled, *Artifacts*. The diptych is part of a series by Paglen titled, *The Other Night Sky*, in which he tracks and photographs classified spacecraft. Paglen's diptych juxtaposes the military's historical and ongoing presence in the American West as represented in its conquest by visual communications technologies: First, by the army's nineteenth-century photographic surveys, and now by its omnipresence in the geosynchronous orbit of military satellites overhead, launched from California's Vandenburg airbase.

"The other night sky" is populated not only by the geosynchronous orbit of military satellites but decommissioned, "dead" satellites, endlessly trapped in orbit. Such satellites represent twentieth-century human "artifacts" that, juxtaposed to the "timeless" image of the mysteriously disappeared Anasazi, suggest that such aging satellites foreshadow the inevitable artifacts of our own disappearance. The juxtaposition, in Paglen's diptychs, of evidence of "the other night sky" with the night sky we associate with such remotely picturesque Western landscapes, themselves evidence of a geological history that predates human existence, are veritable *momento mori*—allegorical reminders of the origins of techné and of what will have been.

This paper examines Paglen's diptychs of landscapes and skyscapes alongside his more recent work through "limit telephotography" of such covert western landscape sites as remote, corporate-run

prisons in California, and classified ops sites of rendition and drone warfare. Like Paglen's diptychs, covert and classified landscapes are a reminder that, embedded in aestheticized views of the "empty" West, are the ideologies of surveillance and conquest; and he further reminds us of the ways that technologies of vision can be instrumentalized toward these ends.

17. Those Wide Open Sexy Spaces: ‘Land Porn’ in the popular Western from Zane Grey to Taylor Sheridan’s “Yellowstone”

David Fenimore (University of Nevada)

Panel 7 · Monday 5 Oct, 17:00–18:00· Aula Magna

Thanks in part to their English forebears, Euro-Americans demonstrate a collective tendency to encode nationalism and nostalgia for an imaginary past into idealized representations of “virgin wilderness,” to the extent of sexualizing these images, frequently superimposing the nude female form on Western topography. Thus amplified, their lust for possession is reflected in the romantic settings of popular Western novels and film, as well as in the jealous attachment of average American homeowners to the suburban lots they tame and subjugate in everyday re-enactments of Manifest Destiny.

18. Empty Landscapes and Haunted Homesteads: The Convergence of Western and Weird Fiction in Victor LaValle's *Lone Women* (2023)

Amaya Fernández Menicucci (University of the Basque Country, EHU)

Panel 7 · Monday 5 Oct, 17:00–18:00 · Aula Magna

In 2023, Victor LaValle published a novel centred on a young African American woman who is forced to migrate—swiftly and for mysterious reasons—to Montana in hopes of taking advantage of the new homesteading legislation. There, she encounters other "lone women", as well as o/Other things—fantastical, horrific, or simply weird o/Others. In this paper, I analyse the way in which Victor LaValle combines the settings, characters and tropes of the western genre with elements of the fantastic, touches of magic realism and the physical and emotional violence of horror fiction in general and of the subgenre of body horror in particular. Approaching the novel from both the theoretical framework of genre and gender studies, my analysis is primarily concerned with the process of genderisation of the characters through the 'weirding' of the Western Frontier. From a methodological point of view, I focus on the narratological structure of the novel, specifically on the construction of setting in relation with the process of characterisation. I contend, in fact, that the rhetoric and narrative devices used by LaValle articulate the character's arcs and their process of subjective construction across the three dimensions of setting—the spatial, the temporal, and the atmospheric. Through this analysis, I will demonstrate that the novel constitutes not only a hybridisation of genres, but also a convergence of ideological approaches to gender identity. The final result is a fantastical vision of the experience of the American West, both as a woman in general terms and, more specifically, as a racialised woman.

19. Paralysed Homes and Open Frontiers: Joyce, Cather, and Transatlantic Geographies of Displacement

Olga Fernández Vicente (University of the Basque Country, EHU)

Panel 22 · Wednesday 7 October, 11:00–12:00 · Salón de Grados

This paper offers a comparative reading of James Joyce's "Eveline" and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* alongside Willa Cather's *My Ántonia* and *O Pioneers!* in order to examine how narratives of displacement, belonging, and identity formation operate across Irish and American literary traditions. Although Joyce and Cather write from distinct cultural and national contexts, their works articulate convergent representations of subjects shaped by mobility, loss, and the negotiation of home. In Joyce, the condition of colonial Ireland produces figures suspended between the desire for departure and the forces of social, religious, and cultural paralysis. In Cather, the American frontier is frequently figured as a space of opportunity; yet it is also marked by hardship, dispossession, and the persistence of migrant memory. Bringing these corpora into dialogue, the paper argues that both authors register structurally analogous experiences of precarity and re-rooting, despite the apparent opposition between stasis and expansion. Drawing on postcolonial theory, diaspora studies, and transatlantic approaches, this study reframes the American frontier as a space not only of national mythmaking but also of inherited colonial logics and transposed European histories. Ultimately, the paper contends that Joyce and Cather construct a shared transatlantic geography of displacement that complicates nationalist paradigms and challenges exceptionalist narratives of progress, revealing displacement as a constitutive condition of modern subjectivity.

Keywords: James Joyce; Willa Cather; Displacement; Transatlantic Studies; Postcolonial Theory; Frontier.

20. "All was open country, rolling and vast": Western Landscapes in Early Automobile Literature

Melanie Frey (University of Konstanz)

Panel 16 · Tuesday 6 October, 15:00–16:30 · Salón de Grados

In this paper, I will detail how the emerging automobiling experience created a new mode of "viewing" the Western environment. I pose that early automobile non-fiction texts between 1900-1920 shaped an idealized perception of the Western landscape. Previous scholarship on the road trip was centred primarily on works of the mid-twentieth century, like Kerouac's novel *On the road* (1957) or the movie *Easy Rider* (1969), as formative to the Western landscape imagery. Their structures, themes, and tropes as well as their focus on the landscape itself have been an inspiration for many later works: countless stories across different forms of media revolve around travelling towards the West as a coming-of-age ritual or portray the West as a mythical destination (seemingly) capable of solving every problem. These works frequently rely on distinct environmental descriptions of the American West – vastness, diversity, and beauty – to conceptualise elements now deeply associated with the road trip like freedom, chance encounters, and wonder. This feature, however, did not originate in the works mentioned above but rather was adapted from conventions established in publications at the turn of the century: early automobile travel narratives. Building on arguments made by Shaffer (*See America First*, 2001) and Sutter (*Driven Wild*, 2002), I will examine the use of panoramic and cinematic scenery descriptions in combination with the paradoxical detachment towards the environment caused by the car – being simultaneously *closer to* nature due to the car's capacity to drive off-road while also remaining *detached from* nature due to viewing it from inside the vehicle – to illustrate the emergence of a new mode of environmental perception. This literary mode of perceiving the West further made its way into a broader cultural imaginary, including the "See America First" tourism campaign from the late 1910s onwards. The influence of early road trip narratives, this presentation argues, thereby helped shape an individualized and technologically commodified view of the West.

Quote in title from Gladding, Effie Price (1915). *Across the Continent by the Lincoln Highway.* New York, Brentano's, p. 176.

21. Redefining the "Regional": Suicide and Californian Poetry

Ariadna García Carreño (University of Almería)

Panel 1 · Monday 5 October, 11:30–12:30 · Aula Magna

This paper aims to question the critical tendency to define Californian poetry since the midnineteenth century primarily through its thematic engagement with the local natural landscape, often framed within a regionalist paradigm that privileges rural imagery, wilderness, and escapist idealization. Such readings, shaped by broader constructions of the American West as a space of natural abundance and cultural otherness, have obscured the presence of alternative recurrent themes within this poetic tradition. However, focusing on the early twentieth-century San Francisco Bay Area literary circle, led by George Sterling, this study argues that themes such as suicide and self-dissolution were central to a significant poetic corpus, and that the dominance of interpretations of Californian poetry as landscapecentered stems from the visibility of poems published in magazines like *Sunset* and *Out West*, which fostered such themes for promotional and economic purposes such as attracting tourism and settlement.

Methodologically, first, through archival research, this work recovers manuscript poems that circulated privately among members of Sterling's circle rather than through widely distributed literary magazines or that did not circulate at all. Then, drawing on recent materialist approaches to poetry studies, as developed by Jackson (2005), Cohen (2015), and Prins (2016), the analysis applies a historically grounded close reading, considering not only textual features but also material conditions such as format and modes of circulation. By highlighting overlooked archival materials and alternative paths of circulation, this study ultimately calls for a redefinition of the "regional" in Californian poetry, one that accounts for social bonds among poets, material practices, and the complex thematic range of its production.

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22. Babel in the West: The Right to Opacity in *Blood Meridian*

Patricia García Santos (University of Córdoba)

Panel 19 · Wednesday 7 October, 09:30–10:30 · Aula Magna

What if the defining myth of the American West was not only the polymorphous frontier, but also the Tower of Babel? This paper proposes a conceptual reorientation by reading Cormac McCarthy's *Blood Meridian* (1985) as a 'Babelian' narrative, using this as a theoretical lens to render newly legible the epistemological violence underlying the Western genre. Described as the ultimate Western by Harold Bloom (2001), McCarthy's novel offers a canonical site through which to reassess the cultural and mythic foundations of the American West. Drawing on Critical Transparency Studies and mythopoetic theory, this paper argues that *Blood Meridian* can be read as a profound contemporary rewriting of the Babel myth at both formal and thematic levels. On its surface, the novel belongs to the tradition of the revisionist Western; however, beneath that surface, it is one of the most sustained literary reflections on issues of language, knowledge, and power in twentieth-century American fiction.

First, at a formal level, the novel produces a 'Babelian' textual condition: its heteroglossic nature staged by the interplay of English, Spanish, and other languages, shifting registers, and unattributed voices echoes the dispersion of tongues narrated in the myth of the Tower of Babel and generates a certain degree of textual opacity. Secondly, at a thematic level, Judge Holden represents an anti-Babel figure. In other words, he embodies a single linguistic sovereignty that opposes a community striving toward a unified language. Against other characters' "right to opacity" (Glissant 1990; Birchall 2011), Holden catalogs, reads, names, and ultimately destroys everything that resists his taxonomy, therefore reducing the world's multiplicity to a legible, controllable totality. Through this lens, the novel's opacity is not merely stylistic excess but a critique of the epistemological project underpinning Manifest Destiny, understood as a process of naming, ordering, and silencing. Finally, by briefly placing *Blood Meridian* in dialogue with contemporary 'Babelian' narratives such as R. F. Kuang's *Babel, or The Necessity of Violence* (2022), this paper suggests that Babel can function as a theoretical framework for analyzing the politics of language, knowledge, and communication across genres, periods, and geographies.

23. An Act of Confession is an Act of Betrayal: Deathbed Disclosure, Secrecy, and Community in *Blood Meridian*

Patricia García Santos (University of Córdoba) and Adrián Arana-Armesto (University of the Basque Country, EHU)

Panel 12 · Tuesday 6 October, 09:00–10:30 · Salón de Grados

This paper examines the deathbed confession episode in Cormac McCarthy's *Blood Meridian* (1985) as an epistemological problem that interrogates the limits of community, secrecy, and violence in the novel. The deathbed confession has traditionally been associated with redemption and sacramental reconciliation. However, we contend that in *Blood Meridian* it is reconfigured as a scene of enforced transparency that produces neither moral restoration nor stable knowledge. Drawing on Derrida's reflections on confession and the instability of truth ("The Gift of Death"; "Circumfession") and Charles Barbour's reading of Derrida's writings on secrecy and testimony (2018), we argue that what is revealed is inevitably contaminated by the circumstances of narration itself. Thus, we examine this episode through the lens of Critical Transparency Studies, drawing on Clare Birchall's theorization of radical secrecy and the right to opacity (2021), Michel Foucault's reflections on confession as a technology of truth (1976), and Georg Simmel's account of secrecy as a structuring principle of social relations (1906).

Focusing on the harnessmaker episode, the study analyses confession as a liminal speech act produced at the threshold between life and death, suspending juridical and social consequences. This confession serves as a form of self-exoneration, displacing its ethical burden onto the community of listeners. The transmission of the secret, therefore, does not constitute an act of parrhesiastic truth and does not trigger redemption, but rather a recursive logic of violence: an exposure that cannot be undone, only further reconfigured through subsequent acts of meaning-making.

Moreover, the article situates this scene within the broader regime of asymmetrical visibility that structures *Blood Meridian*, where Judge Holden embodies totalizing surveillance while remaining radically opaque (Kirsch, 2023). Confession here paradoxically intensifies secrecy, generating narratives that undermine epistemological certainty and revealing how community is constituted through the circulation of violence and unstable testimony, as a remnant of the nihilism characteristic of the Old West.

24. El Western en la narrativa del exilio vasco republicano de 1939: *Cualquiera que os dé muerte*, de Cecilia G. de Guilarte

Carmen Gil Fombellida (University of the Basque Country, EHU)

Panel 3 · Monday 5 October, 12:30–13:30 · Aula Magna

En *Cualquiera que os dé muerte*, obra que recibió el Premio Águilas de novela en 1969, la vida de la joven Francisca Amaya Iraola, luego María Cascagorri, se verá transfigurada por su necesidad de supervivencia y adaptación a las condiciones de su exilio americano, tras la Guerra Civil española.

Desde el contundente arranque cinematográfico de la novela, que sorprende por su rotundidad y dureza, el punto de partida de la narración nos situará, en el determinante espacio natural del desierto de Sonora, en una auténtica escena de Western.

Así, la imaginería del Western con protagonismo femenino, anterior o coetáneo a la narrativa de Guilarte, es motivo de un análisis comparatista a partir de títulos como *Duel in the Sun/Duelo al sol* (1946), *Rancho Notorius/Encubridora* (1952), *Forty Guns/Cuarenta pistolas* (1957), *Cat Balou* (1965), *C'era una volta il West/Hasta que llegó su hora* (1968) o *100 Rifles (*1969). Décadas después seguimos encontrándonos, en este siglo XXI, con otras propuestas cinematográficas y literarias, en películas como *Meek's Cutoff* (2010), *La banda de los ocho* (2015) y series como *Godless* (2017) o *Los abandonados* (2025).

La novela de Cecilia G. de Guilarte, además de recuperar la memoria histórica del anarcosindicalismo y de la diáspora vasca y republicana en tierras americanas, adquiere una dimensión simbólica y universal. Este relato, con un marcado estilo cercano al Western, no solo representa a una mujer concreta, en un espacio duro e inhóspito, sino que puede observarse como símbolo de una generación y de otros prototipos femeninos, de relatos de toma de conciencia y de acción, marcados por las consecuencias de la violencia, la represión y el silencio colectivo.

SUMMARY

In *Cualquiera que os dé muerte* (*Whoever Kills You*), a novel that won the Águilas Prize in 1969, the life of the young Francisca Amaya Iraola—later known as María Cascagorri—is transformed by her need to survive and adapt to the conditions of her exile in America following the Spanish Civil War. From the novel's powerful cinematic opening, which surprises with its forcefulness and harshness, the narrative's starting point places us in the defining natural setting of the Sonoran Desert, in a true Western scene.

Thus, the imagery of the Western with a female lead, predating or contemporary to Guilarte's narrative, forms the basis for a comparative analysis drawing on titles such as *Duel in the Sun* (1946), *Rancho Notorious* (1952), *Forty Guns* (1957), *Cat Balou* (1965), *Once Upon a Time in the West* (1968) and 100 Rifles (1969). Decades later, in the 21st century, we continue to encounter other cinematic and literary works, in films such as *Meek's Cutoff* (2010), *The Eight* (2015) and series such as *Godless* (2017) or The Abandons (2025).

Cecilia G. de Guilarte's novel, as well as reviving the historical memory of anarcho-syndicalism and the Basque and Republican diaspora in the Americas, takes on a symbolic and universal dimension. This story, with a style strongly reminiscent of the Western genre, not only portrays a specific woman in a harsh and inhospitable environment,

but can also be seen as a symbol of a generation and of other female archetypes, of tales of awakening and action, marked by the consequences of violence, repression and collective silence.

25. The West's Shadow: The Korean War's Legacy in Angela Mi Young Hur's *Folklorn*

Eider Gómez Sainz (University of the Basque Country, EHU)

Panel 2 · Monday 5 October, 11:30–12:30 · Salón de Grados

Angela Mi Young Hur's novel *Folklorn* centres on Elsa Park, a Korean American physicist stationed in Antarctica who returns to California after her mother's death. This paper examines how *Folklorn* links the legacy of the Korean War to Korean American experiences of migration, racialisation and trauma. Thus, the paper draws on scholarly research on the historical background of the Korean War, migration and trauma, and their related consequences, which are important to understand the novel in this context. First, the paper situates Elsa's family within the broader context of the Korean War and the Korean immigration to the United States. It then analyses the trauma Elsa suffers due to her family history and the racism she experiences when growing up in an American society. Particular attention is given to Elsa's imaginary friend, which functions as a coping mechanism for dealing with the trauma she experienced. The analysis demonstrates that *Folklorn* presents trauma not just as an individual experience but as a historical and intergenerational condition produced by war, migration and racialisation. A condition for which Elsa develops strategies to deal with that trauma, both in her childhood and in adulthood, through an imaginary friend. Overall, *Folklorn* provides insight into how the American influence—historically through the Korean War and migration, and socially through racism—shapes both Elsa's family trauma and her own trauma. The paper concludes that Elsa's gradual discovery of her parents' past enables her to understand the mysteries of their lives.

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26. Where is the West in Brazilian (Post-)Westerns?

Jesús Ángel González López (University of Cantabria)

Panel 15 · Tuesday 6 October, 15:00–16:30 · Aula Magna

The best-known examples of Brazilian adaptations of the Western genre are *cangaceiro* films, a series of films that started with Lima Barreto's *O Cangaceiro* in 1953, and had its heyday in the 1960s with films like A *Morte Comanda o Cangaço* (Carlos Coimbra, 1960) or Glauber Rocha's *Cinema Novo* films *Deus e o Diabo na Terra do Sol* (1964) and *Antonio das Mortes* (1969). *Cangaceiro* films are also known as *Nordesterns* because they are set in the Northeast of Brazil, more specifically in a poor, arid part of the Northeast known as the *sertão*, where *cangaceiros*, a Brazilian form of social bandits, ruled during the second half of the 19th century and well into the 20th century. *Cangaceiro* stories are still very popular in Brazil and have actually become a sign of identity for the Northeast.

However, that is not the only part of Brazil that has become a setting for the adaptation of Western stories. The "Center-West" Region is a frontier area that is still being settled and has become the setting of several frontier Western stories. Films like *Caingangue* (Carlos Hugo Christensen, 1973) and *Desejo Selvagem* (David Cardoso, 1979), set in the contemporary borders with Paraguay and Bolivia, use Western conventions to tell Brazilian frontier stories of land control and violence. This trend has continued in recent films that echo the West in their own titles: *Faroeste Caboclo* (René Sampaio, 2023) uses the Western references to tell a tragic love story set in the outskirts of Brasilia, whereas *Oeste Outra Vez* (Erico Rassi, 2024) focuses on a group of violent antiheroes characterized by chains of revenge and toxic masculinity.

Finally, there is a group of Western-like films shot and set in Rio Grande do Sul, another frontier region with a very strong identity and a violent history which has been reflected in two films: *Ana Terra* (Durval García, 1972) and *Anahí de las Misiones* (Sérgio Silva, 1997). Both films have women protagonists, and they both rewrite Western conventions to tell stories of the violent past of the territory. *Ana Terra* shows a family of Portuguese settlers moving on to a land that had been part of the Spanish Empire, and turns around the role of Indians by showing an educated Guarani who had been brought up in a Jesuit mission. Finally, *Anahy de las Misiones* rewrites the myth of the Brazilian *gaúcho* by focusing on a female protagonist who makes a living by looting battlefields during one of the wars that devastated the territory.

27. The Western Code. Heroes and Bullies

Manuel González de la Aleja Barberán (University of Salamanca)

Panel 17 · Tuesday 6 October, 17:30–18:30 · Aula Magna

The idea that the United States is an extremely violent country is not debatable; it is a fact that stubborn statistics sadly corroborate almost every day. It is no wonder, then, that many studies, theories, and political speeches have tried to explain why, with the 2nd Amendment at the epicenter of the debate.

At the same time, the Western—the popular literary and cinematic genre—is frequently referenced in many of these discussions. This theory, presented here in a very simplified way, suggests that America has used the narrative of the conquest of the West as a portrait of its true identity. A country built through the imagery of brutal fistfights, gory showdowns, cold-blooded sheriffs, and ruthless gunslingers had to result in a nation convinced that violence—whether individual, collective, or institutional—must always be the answer. Without a doubt, the Western is blamed.

I cannot agree with this position, because I like Westerns and I do not like gratuitous violence.

Westerns are violent because, at the time, the West was also violent—or at least that is what these narratives have led us to believe. Law and order belonged to the East and could not be fully established on the frontier until that frontier disappeared, at least physically. Justice had to be imposed, and in the classical Western it was the good guys who—whether they liked it or not, often reluctantly—had to enforce it. Remember: a man has got to do what he has to do. But they always acted according to what we may call “the code.”

The purpose of this paper is to describe how this code was embodied by the heroes created by classical authors such as Owen Wister, Clarence E. Mulford, Frederick Faust (Max Brand), Zane Grey, Ja.

28. Cowboys don’t cry. La desmitificación del vaquero en *The Rider* (2018) y *Extraña forma de vida* (2023)

Maite Goñi Indurain (University of the Basque Country, EHU) and Oier Quincoces (University of the Basque Country, EHU)

Panel 22 · Wednesday 7 October, 11:00–12:00 · Salón de Grados

En esta propuesta de comunicación planteamos un análisis de dos obras del cine contemporáneo, en las que la figura del vaquero es protagonista: *The Rider* (2018), dirigida por Chloé Zhao, y *Extraña forma de vida* (2023), del director manchego Pedro Almodóvar. Su interés radica en la forma en la que ambas subvierten los estereotipos que de forma hegemónica se han asociado a dicha figura. En *The Rider* nos encontramos a un *cowboy* profesional, puesto que se gana la vida participando en rodeos, que tiene que dejar de serlo debido a un accidente que le produce una discapacidad permanente. En *Extraña forma de vida*, a su vez, se da cuenta de la compleja relación sexoafectiva entre un *sheriff* y un ranchero que en el pasado trabajaron juntos como pistoleros a sueldo. Si en el primer caso el vaquero experimenta una crisis de identidad debido a esa lesión derivada del ejercicio de su propia profesión, en el segundo vemos cómo la disidencia sexual de los personajes ha condicionado y aún condiciona su propia vida y los vínculos que establecen entre ellos. Todo ello nos lleva a la deconstrucción de determinados atributos propios del vaquero en su sentido más convencional, como su invulnerabilidad o fortaleza innatas o su adscripción a una masculinidad hegemónica. Para poder llevar a cabo el análisis, nos detendremos específicamente en dos cuestiones. En primer lugar, estudiaremos el comportamiento de los personajes en función de si el espacio en el que se encuentran es público o privado, y cómo esto intersecciona con los dos ejes de desigualdad que estos encarnan: la discapacidad y la disidencia sexual. En segundo lugar, pretendemos indagar en el efecto que tanto una como otra tienen en la forma en que los protagonistas se perciben y se proyectan como hombres.

29. Western Liminality in American and Irish Nineteenth-Century Gothic Settings: E.A. Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" (1839) and J.S. Le Fanu's "A Chapter in the History of a Tyrone Family" (1839)

Richard Jorge (University of the Basque Country, EHU)

Panel 20 · Wednesday 7 Oct, 9:30–10:30 · Salón de Grados

Liminality is an inherent concept to the Gothic tradition. Messent (2000) defines it as the concept of the threshold, an in-between space associated with "provisionality, instability, intermediate forms [lying] between the known and the unknown" (23). This conceptualisation stems from the physical and psychological spaces where the Gothic narrative develops. Natural borders and political frontiers favour an interpretation of Gothic liminality as a transformative force, perhaps, because a text becomes a Gothic narrative when "fixed demarcations are called into question by the presence of an interloper who interrogates the existence of such boundar[ies]" (Armitt, 1997, 90).

The sociocultural situation of Ireland and the United States during the nineteenth century eases reinterpretations of literary productions. The West of Ireland comes to symbolise the true spirit of the Irish nation. Providing "the greatest contrast to the landscape of Englishness" (Nash 1993, 201), it sets in opposition "the 'overcivilized' city (the East, Dublin) and the passionate, underdeveloped country (the West, Connacht, the Aran Isles)" (Hirsch 1991, 1127). This vision of "pronounced hostility to law and order" (Gibbons 1996, 24) depicts the West as a liminal space, dissolving the boundaries of civilisation. This interpretation reverberates in American Gothic, which "challenges that mythology [the possibility of self-made men and women] by depicting an American landscape in which it is easy to become irrevocably lost" (Bendixen 2017, 32-33).

In this sense, the writings of J.S. Le Fanu and E.A. Poe pose an interesting contrastive analysis as they are set at a time when both Western borders helped reconfigure these countries' idiosyncrasies. This paper examines how the liminality of the Western frontier influenced both writers in the creation of their Gothic scenarios. Applying postcolonial readings to their narrative techniques, it unveils criticism of colonial concerns over legitimacy, race and belonging central to nineteenth-century Irish and American societies.

Keywords: J.S. Le Fanu; E.A. Poe; Ninteenth-century gothic; Liminality; Postcolonialism

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30. Naturalizing and Exposing the Settler Colonial Landscape

William R. Handley (University of Southern California)

Panel 21 · Wednesday 7 October, 11:00–12:00 · Aula Magna

This paper will explore and contrast representational strategies artists have employed both to naturalize and expose the violence of settler colonialism, from the paintings of Albert Bierstadt to Kent Monkman's (Fisher River Cree) queer-Indigenous reimagining of Bierstadt's West; and from Zane Grey's agential rocks to Cormac McCarthy's blood-saturated stones. Central to my analysis will be the question of how the Sublime both rationalizes and naturalizes white settler and colonial violence while displacing human agency, even as preoccupations with the West's jagged and perilous geology reveal a haunting awareness of the depredations of conquest.

31. (Un)Conventional Cowboys: An Exploration of Old West Myths in David Lynch's *The Cowboy and the Frenchman* (1988)

Salma Hmata Fahmi (Complutense University of Madrid)

Panel 15 · Tuesday 6 October, 15:00–16:30 · Aula Magna

In what is probably one of his lesser-known works, *The Cowboy and the Frenchman* (1988), David Lynch explores American and French cultural stereotypes, with a special focus on those that have long been portrayed in popular culture as the defining aspects that encapsule the essence of the American West. Set in a ranch in the American Wild West, the short film opens with imagery often linked to the Old West and male characters who (at first glance) seem to embrace the typical cowboy archetype. However, the present study aims to showcase that the arrival of the Frenchman in the Western ranch ends up subverting the preconceptions the viewers might form based on Old West myths, especially those surrounding cowboys. Even though the cowboys at first seem to fit certain stereotypes such as being stoic and thriving on self-sufficiency, the animosity and aggression (especially toward foreigners) that are often used to describe said Western men are characteristics that are eventually challenged, as the film ultimately presents the cowboys as amicable and even somewhat comical, as well as open to celebrating cultural diversity. For instance, while cowboys have often been culturally portrayed as extremely patriotic to the point of only and overtly embracing their American identity, at the end of the film they all end up chanting "*Vive la France*!". Thus, the study aims to examine Lynch's short film to determine the ways in which the director satirizes the dominant conventions that surround the American West by both embracing its lasting mythology in popular culture and criticizing what is believed to be one of its defining characteristics (that is, patriotism). All in all, the study intends to demonstrate that the 1988 short film continues to stand out as not only a brilliant exploration but also a challenging reconfiguration of Old West myths.

32. Spider Dreams and The Colonial Imaginary in *Red Dead Redemption 2*

Sammy Holden (Edge Hill University)

Panel 18 · Tuesday 6 October, 17:30–18:30 · Salón de Grados

Red Dead Redemption 2 is the popular sequel in a franchise of Western-genre games from Rockstar Games, originally released in 2018. Ahead of the 2026 4K reissue of the game, players revisiting the game gave it a refreshed look and discovered an unexpected mystery.

The game is open world, leaving the player to create their own narratives alongside the main story. It rewards exploration through encounters with places on the game map. These points of interest are humorous or related to real-world history, fantasy and myth. A player can stumble across them accidentally or hunt them down with intention.

As the game is known for being so large, with 100% completion being achievable even without discovering all it has to offer, fans and players have kept searching and discovering, picking the game apart using other software and hacking methods.

In January 2026, revisiting Easter eggs that seemed incomplete, players discovered several symbols on full display, spiders carved into wooden telephone poles. Through close attention and perseverance, players then found that these wooden poles would each display a physical cobweb at a certain time of day, and each would house a set of colourful feathers, similar to ones seen on the clothing and possessions of indigenous characters. Within the code of the game, these webs are referred to as ‘spiderdreams’. The reasoning for the webs has remained unsolved as of May 2026. While players are determined to get to some kind of satisfying ending, the mystery itself raises interesting questions of what the idea of ‘mystery’ is when considered in a Western setting.

Using media theories on games and Westerns, as well as historical views of ideas of the West, this presentation will offer the first academic analysis of the deeper meanings generated by the player activities of the Spider Dreams mystery.

33. Manifest Domination: Nonhuman Animals and the Ideology of Western Expansion

Irati Jiménez-Pérez (University of the Basque Country, EHU)

Panel 11 · Tuesday 6 October, 09:00–10:30 · Aula Magna

This paper examines the centrality of nonhuman animal oppression within the settler colonial project of the American West, arguing that nonhuman animal subjugation was not only materially enacted but also ideologically reinforced through cultural production. Drawing on Animal Studies, Ecocriticism and oppression studies, I analyse how settler colonialism redefined nonhuman animals as property, resources and symbols of wilderness to be controlled. This ontological shift was integral to the colonial practices of domination such as the slaughter, commodification and ecological displacement, which paralleled the dispossession of Indigenous peoples and land. This paper focuses on how literature, painting, photography, the entertainment industry and film contributed to legitimising these hierarchies. Literary works by Owen Wister and Zane Grey romanticised the cowboy ethos while depicting nonhuman animals as tools or obstacles to conquest, whereas Willa Cather occasionally suggested more complex nonhuman animal presences within a settler framework. Similarly, painters such as Frederic Remington and Charles Marion Russel portrayed nonhuman animals as threats or trophies within narratives of Western expansion. Moreover, the photography by Edward S. Curtis and William Henry Jackson further reinforced colonial mythologies through images that exoticised Indigenous relationships with nonhuman animals or erased original inhabitants from Western landscapes. The entertainment industry amplified these narratives through rodeos and Wild West shows. The film industry, with works such as *The Vanishing American* (1925), *Stagecoach* (1939) or the more recent *The Revenant* (2015), used nonhuman animal imagery to dramatise frontier violence and the ideology of Manifest Destiny. Ultimately, this paper argues that cultural production did not merely reflect settler colonial ideology but actively helped construct and naturalise nonhuman animal exploitation as inevitable, heroic and civilising. Understanding this entanglement is, indeed, essential to challenge settler myths and imagining more ethical multispecies futures.

Keywords: Animal Studies; Nonhuman Animals; Oppression; American West; Anthropocentrism

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34. Relational Wests: Kinship, Materiality, and More-Than-Human Worlds in Louise Erdrich's *Python's Kiss*

Silvia Martínez-Falquina (University of Zaragoza)

Panel 5 · Monday 5 October, 16:00–17:00 · Aula Magna

The American West has long been mythologized as a space of individual freedom, conquest, and separation from the natural world. Louise Erdrich's *Python's Kiss* (2026) offers a counter-vision, rewriting the West in radical relationality. Across thirteen stories spanning past, present, and speculative future, Erdrich holds settler and Indigenous imaginaries together in a single relational vision, refusing to resolve their tension into hierarchy or opposition. Building on a framework of Indigenous materiality and relationality, this paper argues that despite the stories' diversity, they all share the ethical and aesthetic principle of kinship restoration, sustaining and repairing relations across time, space, species, and the animate/inanimate divide.

Focusing on animals, objects, landscapes, and digital environments as relational agents, the paper maps the book across three temporal zones. In the historical West, "Python's Kiss," "The Hollow Children," and "Love of My Days" stage settler communities on the plains of North Dakota and Minnesota where more-than-human agents—a guard dog, the elements, a python, or a mare and her son—enact and disrupt relation. Moving towards the present, the Indigenous narrator of "Amelia" cares for objects and enacts a quiet kinship restoration that unsettles the West's racial boundaries. The contemporary West—"Wedding Dresses," "Borsalino," "Assassin," "December 26," "The Stone," "The Feral Troubadour," "Big Cat"—maps both Indigenous and settler life across Minnesota and Wisconsin and beyond. Objects, animals, and people restore kinship and forge unexpected bonds across species and communities. The speculative West—"Domain" and "Asphodel"—extends this relational vision into a digital environment which becomes itself animate and relational.

Through the interlocking frameworks of grounded normativity (Coulthard), Place-Thought and decolonial materiality (Watts, Dobroski), mino-bimaadiziwin (Spry, Gross, Simpson, Kimmerer), and kinship restoration (Majhor and Dean)—the paper argues that Erdrich's collection articulates a vision of the West as a living relational web—transtemporal, more-than-human, and irreducible to any single perspective or tradition.

35. Echoes of Antiquity: Reflections on Classical Influence on Some Nineteenth-Century American Women Writers of the West

Megan McGilchrist (Independent Scholar)

Panel 20 · Wednesday 7 October, 09:30–10:30 · Salón de Grados

In her introduction to The Classical Tradition in Modern American Fiction, Tessa Roynon says that there are “ancient presences in modern texts”. This is quite a significant point to mention with regard to Western American fiction, which sometimes seems to be regarded as newly formed from a world which in which it had no antecedents. In this project, I am going to suggest that Western American fiction - particularly Western American fiction written by women in the late19th and early 20th centuries - was often deeply influenced by the classical tradition of Greece and Rome.

In this paper I will discuss two of the four writers who I am working on for a book currently titled, Echoes of Antiquity, which discusses the influence of a classical world upon 19 century and early 20th century American women writers, principally of the west. The first of these writers is San Francisco's Gertrude Atherton. Hugely prolific, and highly accomplished, Atherton is now nearly invisible. Once compared with Edith Wharton, and more read than that writer during the peak of her career, one now struggles to find copies of her writings in print,

The second writer of the four, is Willa Cather. Cather’s sensibility has much to do with transcendentalism, although I believe she comes to it via the Greeks, rather than the Harvard divinity school path, which was so well trodden by Emerson, Thoreau, and their contemporaries. My goal is to establish sources of classical influence in some of Cather’s work. Mary Ruth Ryder, in her study of classical influences on Cather, wrote,

“That Cather had drawn heavily upon classical literature, history, and arts had long been apparent to me from the allusions sprinkled liberally throughout her novels….these myths directed her thought and molded her art.”

(The final two authors are Mary Austin and Sarah Orne Jewett.)

36. The River That Remains: Myth, Materiality, and Emotional Breakdown in Joan Didion's *Run River* (1963)

Natalia Medina Martínez (University of Alcalá)

Panel 6 · Monday 5 October, 16:00–17:00 · Salón de Grados

This presentation focuses on the Sacramento River as a central site through which Joan Didion's *Run River* (1963) interrogates California's settler legacy, which materially depended on the management of water to guarantee its promise of opportunity, stability, and progress.[1] I argue that the river signifies the literal and figurative end of the promise of the west. Central to this portrayal is the Sacramento River, which I conceptualise as a material resource that supports and reflects the McClellans' social and economic standing. Moreover, it becomes a narrative location where violent, confrontational, and emotionally revealing situations are staged, upsetting the controlled performances that are upheld in domestic spaces. Following ecocritical Western scholarship that considers the environment in which myths are exposed2, I examine how the conflicts that surface at the riverside are shaped by the social and economic structures the characters have inherited, including the viability of agricultural life, the traditional riverfront family and lingering expectations of the pioneer past. First, I examine the river's role of physically sustaining and undermining the economic foundations of the McClellan family; second, I analyse the riverbank as a recurring site of violence and emotional revelation; and third, I explore how the symbolic role of the river contributes to a broader critique of the exhaustion of the western pioneer myth. By repeatedly staging moments of rupture at the riverbank *Run River* thus exposes that this inherited mythology persists only as a destabilising force, shaping the present through cycles of repetition, disillusionment, and emotional paralysis. Focusing on Didion's use of the river reveals how inherited histories continue to shape, constrain, and destabilize the McClellans individual lives, but also challenge traditional representations of the American West.

[1] See Worster, Donald. *Rivers of Empire: Water, Aridity, and the Growth of the American West.* Pantheon Books, 1985. 2 See, Witschi, Nicolas S. *Traces of Gold: California's Natural Resources and the Claim to Realism in Western American Literature.* University of Alabama Press, 2002.

37. White Skin, Blue Masks: Racism and the Disavowal of Indigenous Resistance in the American West in *Avatar: Fire and Ash* (2025)

Natalia Mirón-Florido (University of the Basque Country, EHU)

Panel 13 · Tuesday 6 October, 12:00–13:00 · Aula Magna

Popular culture can be credited with cementing the association of indigenous resistance with the American West. However, because there is a persistent social desire for "a 'perfect victim,' one that does not resist oppression whether through violence or non-violence" indigenous resistance can also be easily disavowed if it is perceived as threatening to settler colonialism (Semerjdian 2026: 35). The purpose of this paper is to exemplify the disavowal of indigenous resistance in the West through the study of racial discourse in *Avatar: Fire and Ash* (2025). To do so, the paper shall rely on the framework provided by Carrillo and Ipsen in "Redefining Discrimination: Dismantling Environmental Protections through the Logic of Reactionary Colorblindness" (2026).

In their study of Trump's second administration's environmental policies, the authors argue that the American far-right has appropriated the concept of colourblindness to reframe any measures addressing racial inequalities as instances of 'reverse racism' against whites (2026: 5). The plot of *Avatar: Fire and Ash* displays a similar evolution from claims of colourblindness to accusations of reverse racism. In the movie, human settlers claim a right to the indigenous' Na'vi's land on the basis that they are primitive and inferior. However, there is no overt acknowledgement that this is a case of racism and instead the narrative whitewashes discrimination of the Na'vi as speciesism. By the time racism is directly addressed, it has been reframed as affecting exclusively (white) humans or "pink-skins." Thus, Na'vi resistance to colonialism is disavowed as both unintelligent and racist. In the context of a movie that prides itself on its anti-colonial and pro-indigenous message, the presence of this neoliberal rhetoric is proof of the prevalence of racist opinions on indigenous resistance not just in white supremacist circles, but in society at large.

38. Lone Justice Revisited: The West of Maria McKee

Antoni Monserrat Ferrer (University of the Basque Country, EHU)

Panel 10 · Monday 5 October, 18:00–19:00 · Salón de Grados

This paper examines the many versions of the American West articulated through the music of the Los Angeles–based band Lone Justice. Emerging from the Southern California roots-rock and "cowpunk" scene of the 1980s—a scene that resisted generic classification as "too rock for country, too country for rock"—Lone Justice comes up with an imagined West that moves across regional, national, and global cultural meanings. Although the band's name itself evokes familiar mythologies of the Western outlaw, frontier justice, and individual rebellion, its musical practices are situated within the "Western Edge" of Los Angeles country-rock, a scene in which older traditions of country and Western music were revived, reconfigured, and rendered newly relevant through the energy of punk and the distinctive sensibilities of Southern California.

Lone Justice's music negotiates these overlapping and sometimes competing conceptions of the West, understanding the West as an evolving cultural imaginary, formed through multiple, mutually influential cultural traditions and continually reconfigured across regions, genres, generations, and national borders.

39. “Los sitios derramados que habité”: Interspecific Imaginaries in Tino Villanueva’s Poetic Oeuvre

Juan Ignacio Oliva (University of La Laguna)

Panel 1 · Monday 5 October, 11:30–12:30 · Aula Magna

Chicano poet and activist –committed to human rights and the social and racial equality of his people– Tino Villanueva (1941) is also a remarkably insightful portraitist of the vicissitudes of the human soul, which lead to existential crises and the questioning of political irrationality. As a full-fledged citizen, integrated into the American system, his work is openly confessional, oscillating between the problematic identity of the dissident, on the one hand, and the militant struggle against the everyday apartheid and boutique xenophobia (Papaellinas) suffered by US ethnic minorities, on the other. Within his poetics, there is also room for the observation of the natural environment, the feel-thinking perception (Fals, Anzaldúa) of the inhabited *locus*, and, above all, the interaction with the more-than-human world that surrounds us. This paper therefore analyzes the entanglements between species, the eloquence of the landscape that avoids the pathetic fallacy, and the agency of rhizomatic (Deleuze & Guattari), sympoietic (Haraway), or symbiotic (Albrecht) networks established between material or immaterial bodies. The main theoretical framework for this study is embedded in the umbrella of the New Ecological Materialisms, particularly eco- and perma-poetic analysis and biological dividing ecotones, as well as the theory of membranes and physical textures, transcorporeality (Alaimo), and porous viscosity (Tuana). In this way, there will be highlighted the dialogic importance of atmospheric phenomena such as fog, wind, or rain in “Espera”[Wait]” or “Solo sé que ahora” [“I Only Know That Now”]; the gravitational density of bodies in “Te contaré de un difunto” [“I Will Tell of a Deceased Man”] or “En el claroscuro de los años” [“In the Chiaroscuro of the Years”]; and, above all, the (dis)affection that is established with biotic and abiotic beings in “Memoria que no cesa” [“Memory that does not cease”] or “Imaginé un papel” [“I imagined a piece of paper”].

40. The Western as an Inspiration in Polish Music

Marek Paryz (University of Warsaw)

Panel 14 · 5 Oct, 12:00–13:00 · Salón de Grados

The paper presents an overview of uses of the Western in Polish popular music from the 1970s until today. It discusses examples from a range of genres, including musical ballad, country, disco polo, rap and blues. It explains historical and cultural contexts that account for the specificity of Western references in Polish music.

41. La mirada traductora de un fotógrafo en el Oeste: *In the American West*, de Richard Avedon (1985)

María Pérez López de Heredia (University of the Basque Country, EHU)

Panel 12 · 6 Oct, 9:00–10:30 · Salón de Grados

Partiendo de la traducción intersemiótica (o, mejor dicho, de la traducción multimodal, tal y como la definen Boria et al., 2019), la propuesta aborda la fotografía como una forma de dar otra vida a las palabras, las ideas y las emociones. Al revelar mundos ocultos y nuevas lecturas de los mismos, la fotografía puede ofrecer una mirada traductora alternativa (Vidal Claramonte, 2022).

En este sentido, la atención se centrará en una de los artistas más importantes e innovadoras del siglo XX, Richard Avedon, fotógrafo estadounidense que dedicó 5 años de su vida (1979-1984) recorrer el Oeste realizando retratos a sus habitantes desde una mirada alternativa. Como resultado, publicará su gran obra, *In the American West* (1985).

La propuesta explicará las características de su trabajo, dedicado a la experimentación, la (re)creación y la reescritura (Lefevere, 1992). En definitiva, a la traducción. Al hacerlo, ofreció una mirada traductora única sobre el Oeste geográfico, demográfico y social, convirtiendo sus retratos en imágenes de vida alejadas del mito y estereotipo.

Al arrojar luz tanto sobre la obra de Avedon como sobre los estudios dedicados a su figura, se nos brinda la oportunidad de explorar un ejemplo paradigmático de traducción intersemiótica o, mejor, multimodal, en un sentido amplio pero indiscutible. Además, tal vez es el momento de ir más allá y empezar a hablar de traducción material, incluso de traducción casi tangible (Vidal Claramonte, 2024), como explorará la propuesta.

42. Beyond the Frontier: Ecological Belonging and the New West in Richard Powers' *The Overstory*

Rimika Singhvi (IIS University, Jaipur) and Gunja Patni (Amity University Rajasthan)

Panel 6 · Monday 5 October, 16:00–17:00 · Salón de Grados

Traditionally configured through the mythos of the frontier, rugged individualism, and the aggressive extraction of natural resources, the American West has long functioned as a primary site for anthropocentric national identity formation. This paper argues that Richard Powers' *The Overstory* (2018) radically reconfigures these classical Western tropes by displacing the human pioneer, elevating the landscape, and rooting American identity in arboreal attachment, ecological interdependence, and resistance to extractive modernity. Drawing from Critical Plant Studies, Material and Affective Ecocriticism, and Humanistic Geography, the study examines how arboreal agency and lived experience shape the characters' connection to the landscape, producing forms of belonging grounded in ecological intimacy. By tracing immigrant visions of America from initial aspiration and displacement to eventual settlement, the novel argues against an identity rooted solely in ancestry, showing instead how American identity emerges from the act of dwelling. Through its depiction of the nation's reliance on land, the characters' evolving understanding of flora and fauna, and the collective protests to protect the redwood forests, this narrative becomes a site of dissent where human identities are dismantled and reconstructed through their relationship with "non-human others." Ultimately, this paper demonstrates how Powers' narrative architecture effectively de-centers the human self to map a "New West"—a transnational, multi-species habitat where the landscape ceases to be a commodity and instead becomes an active, articulate witness to the Anthropocene. By examining this shift from frontier exploitation to "more-than-human" kinship, the study offers a timely intervention into dominant narratives of Americanness by foregrounding ecological entanglement and environmental consciousness as central to contemporary understandings of identity and belonging.

Keywords: American Identity; Arboreal Agency; Ecological Belonging; Frontier Myth.

43. Roads to Safety, Roads to Kinship: Rethinking Family in *Santiago's Road Home*

Tamara Rojo-Castro (University of the Basque Country, EHU)

Panel 8 · Monday 5 October, 17:00–18:00 · Salón de Grados

In *Santiago's Road Home* (2020), Alexandra Diaz crafts a Latinx migration narrative that exposes the fragility, and at times the harm, fixed in biological family structures. Santiago's early life is shaped by neglect, emotional abuse, and instability, conditions that make leaving home an act of necessity rather than rebellion. Therefore, familial rupture becomes the catalyst for movement and the opening through which new forms of autonomy and possibility emerge.

Analyzed through abolitionist frameworks such as Sophie Lewis's *Abolish the Family* (2022) and M. E. O'Brien's work on the communizing of care, the novel reimagines kinship beyond the constraints of patriarchal and capitalist family norms. Santiago's journey north is marked not only by danger but by the gradual formation of strong ties with fellow migrants and supportive adults. These emergent relationships resonate with Dean Spade's understanding of mutual aid as collective survival and align with Kath Weston's theorization of "families we choose." Mutual care, rather than bloodline, becomes the foundation of trustworthy belonging.

By emphasizing chosen kinship networks as more stable and nurturing than Santiago's biological ties, *Santiago's Road Home* reframes family as something built, earned, and ethically sustained. The novel expands the possibilities for understanding care within Latinx migration narratives, suggesting that liberation may lie not in repairing the traditional family but in imagining forms of relationality grounded in solidarity, reciprocity, and intentional community.

Keywords: Frontier; Found Family; Latinx; Young Adult.

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44. Towards a New Frontier: James S. A. Corey's *Cibola Burn* as a Science Fiction Western

Ane B. Ruiz-Lejarcegui (University of the Basque Country, EHU)

Panel 9 · Monday 5 October, 18:00–19:00 · Aula Magna

This paper examines the narrative of civilizational progress constructed through the mythology of the American Western frontier in James S. A. Corey's *Cibola Burn,* the fourth instalment of the space opera series *The Expanse*. Depicting the aftermath of the creation of a gate network granting access to a thousand unexplored planets, this novel functions both as a colonial frontier narrative and as a study of governance in newly settled territories, highlighting how familiar social conflicts persist even when humanity occupies entirely new worlds. On the planet Ilus, refugees displaced from their home satellite in the Solar System establish a settlement that conflicts with the territorial claims of a corporation authorised by Earth to survey and exploit the planet. Through a framework that draws on science fiction poetics and critical revisions of the frontier myth, this paper argues that *Cibola Burn,* in its straightforward allegory of the American Western, critically addresses the brutality of the manifest destiny ideology framed by Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis as both a civilising mission and a historical inevitability. Therefore, I analyse the narratives underpinning territorial conquest, resource exploitation and perpetual progress as constitutive of colonial identity-formation. In order to do so, this paper addresses the various tropes and iconography of the global Western imaginary used by Corey to express the tensions between civilization and savagery, and nature and humankind, among others. Ultimately, I contend that Corey's exploration of these binaries destabilises old heroic narratives of expansion and civilizational progress, thus foregoing a manifest destiny of galactic proportions in favour of a cynical, pessimistic approach to human exceptionalism.

45. "After all, they're white men like myself": Translating Otherness in British comics *Wells Fargo* & *Pony Express*

Miguel Sanz Jiménez (Complutense University of Madrid)

Panel 13 · Tuesday 6 October, 12:00–13:00 · Aula Magna

This paper follows the two research lines on the West in popular culture and on Comics, graphic novels, and alternative western forms. Particularly, it focuses on the depiction of Otherness—namely, Native American characters—in *Wells Fargo & Pony Express*, a British comic-book written by Kelman D. Frost and illustrated by Don Lawrene that was serialized in the late 1950s in magazines aimed at young readers, such as *Zip*, *Swift*, and *Sun*.

Wells Fargo follows Jim Sharpe, a special agent who travels across the western territories working for the stagecoach company. In one of his numerous adventures, Sharpe protects a boomtown from a Sioux attack. After the fight, he rescues Little Claw, who happens to be chief Blue Bonnet's son. Despite being accused of acting like a traitor by the local sheriff—who complains Sharpe has treated Little Claw "like a white boy"—, the protagonist manages to protect the chief's son and advocates for peace in the territory.

On the contrary, *Pony Express* features Clint Clandon, an eager teenager who joins the mail company as an apprentice. While chasing Black Stark's gang of rustlers—who had raided the Clandon ranch at the beginning of the comic—Clint finds the bandits under attack by the Sioux. In this adventure, the young protagonist opts to shoot the Native American braves and he helps the bandits, arguing that "after all, they're white men like myself".

In 2010, these comics were collected in the volume *The Don Lawrence Westerns* as a tribute to the late artist, who passed away in 2003. In 2025, this book was translated into Spanish and published by Laramie, a small and independently owned company specializing in European western comics, such as the Italian *Tex*. This paper examines Frost and Lawrence's portrayal of Otherness in popular culture during the postwar period in the United Kingdom, its connection to negotiating British identity at the time, as well as how this controversial depiction of Native American characters has been rendered in the aforementioned Spanish edition.

Keywords: British Identity; Comics in Translation; Don Lawrence; Otherness; Western Comics.

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46. The New Wave and its Double: Godard's *Breathless* and the Western

Timothy Scheie (Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester)

Panel 15 · Tuesday 6 October, 15:00–16:30 · Aula Magna

I propose to examine how Jean-Luc Godard's *Breathless* stages an uneasy transnational encounter between the Hollywood Western and the theory and practices of French New Wave cinema.

The connection between New Wave cinema and the Western is not immediately evident. Other genres, notably the gangster film, find more overt expression in a cinema whose themes bear heavily on contemporary, urban, and distinctly French settings. The documentary-like quality of New Wave cinema conveys a vivid sense of the *here and now* of circa 1960 Paris, and may seem inimical to the *there and then* of a distant place and time so prevalent in Western films.

Nonetheless, ten years earlier, as Godard was planning *Breathless*, the Westerns of Anthony Mann, Nicolas Ray, and Howard Hawks, among others, were fueling the ideas that would inform his filmmaking practice. Godard displays unabashed admiration for gestures made by Hollywood's revered *auteurs* in their western films: in a review of Mann's *Man of the West* he even names the western "cinema's most cinematographic genre."

Godard's praise on the page did not translate to a similarly unequivocal presence in *Breathless*. As he borrows from Hollywood Westerns, Godard repurposes these gestures with a systematic "de-westernization" that less rewrites than writes over the genre. Even when a Western is explicitly invoked, it is immobilized and swiftly evacuated.

By 1969, ten years after he filmed *Breathless,* Jean-Luc Godard professed to "hate" Westerns, and cast the genre as the emblem of Hollywood's hegemonic stranglehold on cinematic practices around the world. However, I propose that the oblique "westernness" in *Breathless* is not an emblem of Hollywood's hegemony, nor of a French cinema's rival assertion. I will position Godard's film as a volatile arena of transnational exchange where the energy released from the encounter is both adversarial and generative, leaving Western, paradoxically, both constitutive of and displaced from Godard's filmmaking practice.

47. "I've Been Seeing the Past in one Eye and the Present in the Other": Challenging the Memory, Time and Space of the American West in Shin'ichirō Watanabe's *Cowboy Bebop*

Irene Velasco Conde (University of Salamanca)

Panel 4 · Monday 5 October, 12:30–13:30 · Salón de Grados

The imagery created by the American West and its tropes has been a crucial tool in the building of a common national narrative for the United States. The transculturation achieved by the connection and movement found in the globalised scene of the 21st century has had these tropes, together with the position of the United States and its national and international image, uprooted and seen from new perspectives. This study aims to tackle how such a complex and intrinsically American genre has found itself migrating from its original media, soil and culture into works Shin'ichirō Watanabe's *Cowboy Bebop* (カウボ丨イビバップ), an anime TV series released in the late 90s which recently had its own American live-action adaptation in the Netflix household. Crossing from paper to screen, Japanese authors like Watanabe have removed the American West of its spatial and historical context, recontextualising and rewriting the national memory created by the genre. This research aims to highlight how Asian authors have appropriated and subverted themes and motifs that have traditionally belonged to the American West, rebranding these themes within the current globalised scene. Works like *Cowboy Bebop* go beyond the spatial and temporal frontier of the 19th century American West, urging audiences to imagine and recontextualise narratives that have long defined the mythicised image of the US, breaking away from traditional renderings of time, memory and progress.

Works Cited

Watanabe, Shin'ichirō. *Cowboy Bebop* (カウボ丨イビバップ). Sunrise Inc., 1998-99.

PLENARY ROUND TABLE

Teaching Western American Literature and Culture: Transnational Perspectives

Susan Bernardin (Oregon State University), Kalenda Eaton (University of Oklahoma), Marek Paryz (University of Warsaw) and David Río Raigadas (University of the Basque Country, EHU)

Chair: David Río Raigadas

Plenary round table · Tuesday 6 October, 16:30–17:30 · Aula Magna

The present session aims to discuss different strategies for teaching western American literature and culture from a transnational point of view. The different speakers will share their own experiences in teaching the literature and culture of the American West, explaining their rationales for syllabus design and text selection and exploring several pedagogical practices that may contribute to the consolidation and expansion of western American studies.