



# ABSTRACTS AND NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

**JUSTIN MICHAEL BATTIN**

*RMIT University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam*  
RIAS Associate Editor

## **Explorations on the Event of Photography: Dasein, Dwelling, and Skillful Coping in a Cuban Context**

In the summer of 2016, the author traveled to Havana to begin preliminary work on an interdisciplinary visual ethnography project. While venturing primarily on foot, he took hundreds of high-resolution photographs and interviewed people at random across several localities about their daily routine, their neighborhood, and their expectations about what was to come following the [then] normalizing of relations with the United States. Of the utmost importance to this work was the special attention granted to the inhabited locale where each photograph and interview took place. This article explores these photographs through the lens of the “event of photography,” a term emphasizing the temporal moment when a photographer, photographed subject, and camera encounter one another. With this interpretation, photographs are positioned as historical documents and the practice of photography as a civil and political matter, thus inviting new possibilities to read political life through its visual dimension, as well as to trace different forms of power relations made evident during the ‘event.’ This paper uses phenomenological reflection to explore the meshwork manifestation of these power relations, and articulate how they provide insights about one’s place and responsibility within that ‘event’ in a range of relational contexts.

**Keywords:** Photography, Latin America, Cuba, Heidegger, Skillful Coping

Justin Michael Battin is Senior Lecturer of Communication at RMIT University in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. His research intersects strands of phenomenological and existential philosophy with the everyday uses of mobile media technologies and mobile social media. He is the author of *Mobile Media Technologies and Poiēsis: Rediscovering How We Use Technology to Cultivate Meaning in a Nihilistic World* (Palgrave Macmillan).

*Visual Stories:  
Latin America in  
RIAS Vol. 15,  
Fall–Winter,  
Nº 2/2022*

lan, 2017) and co-editor of *We Need to Talk About Heidegger: Essays Situating Martin Heidegger in Contemporary Media Studies* (Peter Lang, 2018) and *Reading Black Mirror: Insights into Technology and the Post-Media Condition* (transcript, 2021).

**GERMAN A. DUARTE & EVA LEITOLF**

*Free University of Bozen-Bolzano, Italy*

**The Narratives of Topos (τόπος): Eva Leitolf's *Deutsche Bilder—eine Spurensuche* (1992–2008) and *Postcards from Europe* (since 2006)**

Around the turn of the century, the notion of topos (τόπος) underwent an interesting and necessary transformation. Presumably due to the popularization of digital technology, scholars started to progressively uncover the complex nature of the word by expanding on its general meaning as it pertains to the sphere of speech. This phenomenon granted to narratives some spatial characteristics, and at the same time brought into the light an old and critical relationship between text and image. In the form of a conversation, this article deals with this critical relationship between text and image, and the way this conflictual relationship shapes social imaginaries, propaganda, and automatisms when representing social events. The article addresses these questions through an analysis of a series of pictures that had a great impact on Latin America's social imaginary.

**Keywords:** propaganda, text–image relationship, Latin-American collective imaginaries, photography, Critical Media Studies.

German A. Duarte is Assistant Professor of Film and Media Studies at the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano. His research interests include history of media, film history, cybernetics, cognitive-cultural economy, and philosophy. He is the author of several publications, including four books, edited volumes, essays, and papers in international journals. Among them, he recently authored the monographs *Reificación Mediática* (UTADEO—2nd Edition 2020), *Fractal Narrative: About the Relationship Between Geometries and Technology and Its Impact on Narrative Spaces* (transcript, 2014), and co-edited the volumes *Transmédialité, Bande dessinée & Adaptation* (PUBP 2019), *We Need to Talk About Heidegger: Essays Situating Martin Heidegger in Contemporary Media Studies* (Peter Lang, 2018), and *Reading Black Mirror: Insights into Technology and the Post-Media Condition* (transcript, 2021).

Eva Leitolf studied communication design with a focus on photography at University GH Essen. She earned her MFA at the California Institute of the Arts and taught at international art schools and universities before becoming full professor at Free University of Bozen-Bolzano in 2019. Critical examination of the practices of image production and contextualisation is a central thread running through all of Eva Leitolf's work, which explores contested societal phenomena such as colonialism, racism, and migration.

*Visual Stories:  
Latin America in Focus*

RIAS VOL. 15, FALL–WINTER Nº 2/2022

**DIEGO H. FRANCO CÁRDENAS**

*University of Bogotá–Jorge Tadeo Lozano, Colombia*

**Los procesos de mestizaje de la música tradicional latinoamericana y su presencia en el pop; a través del lente del dispositivo colonialista**

La ilustración costumbrista del siglo XIX en Colombia se concentró en la representación de las expresiones culturales nacionales. Desde el análisis iconográfico de dos ilustraciones representativas, realizadas por Ramón Torres Méndez en ese periodo, identificaremos elementos que sirvieron para la construcción de una identidad cultural. Los elementos que conforman dichas expresiones, sin embargo, son el resultado de una mezcla de otras formas de expresión cultural; europeas, americanas y africanas. Este mestizaje, siempre presente, se extiende hasta nuestros días y se puede apreciar en manifestaciones más contemporáneas como el pop, en particular, el movimiento del rock en español en la década de 1990.

**Palabras clave:** música, mestizaje, decolonial, identidad, cultura

The *costumbrista* illustration of the 19th century in Colombia, after independence, focused on the representation of national cultural expressions. From the iconographic analysis of two representative illustrations, made by Ramón Torres Méndez in that period of time, it is possible to identify elements that contribute to the construction of a cultural identity. The elements that make up these expressions, however, are the result of a mixture of other forms of cultural expression, namely European, American, and African. This miscegenation, always present, extends even today and can be seen in more contemporary manifestations such as pop, in particular, of which is the key focus of this article.

**Keywords:** music, miscegenation, decolonial, identity, culture

Diego H. Franco Cárdenas is Assistant Professor at University of Bogotá–Jorge Tadeo Lozano University in the Film and Television Program. He holds a Master of Music with an emphasis on sound engineering from Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, a Specialist in Business Management, Services and Music Products from the EAN University, and a Master of Aesthetics and Art History from the Jorge Tadeo Lozano University.

**LAURA FATTORI**

*Independent researcher, Colombia*

**Remembering Violence in *Matar a Jesús* (2017)**

Events that are violent and traumatic in nature entail the breakdown of language and, with it, the conceptual frameworks that construct our social worlds. The inability of reason to articulate this rupture and to conventionally construct meaning implies that the reality of misery and violence can only be suggested (or formulated) through acts of narration that formally and affectively articulate memory

*Visual Stories:  
Latin America in Focus  
RIAS Vol. 15,  
Fall–Winter,  
Nº 2/2022*

into an imaginary. This dislocation of the event from its representation can then only be mapped through the generation and stimulation of affect—which has come to substitute reason as tool for remembering, narrating and, consequently, of mediating our reality. In the present article, the author studies the role of elements that evoke memory and generate the affective dynamics of a traumatic event. Specifically, the author explores the interactions of memory and affect in the process of narrating violence by analyzing objects of memory (such as photographs) that Paula, the protagonist of *Matar a Jesús* (*Killing Jesus* [2017] by Laura Mora Ortega), utilizes in order to articulate the story of her father's murder. Further, she claims that the incorporation of filmmaker Laura Mora Ortega's own personal experience as victim of violence points to the fact that the incessant necessity of reformulating trauma and stylizing misery widens the gap between reality and its representation, thus rendering violence unimaginable.

**Keywords:** violence, Latin America, Colombian cinema, *Matar a Jesús*, Laura Mora Ortega

Laura Fattori holds an MA in Film and Moving Image Studies from Concordia University in Montreal, Canada. Her current research interest deals with the role cinema plays in the Colombian 'post-conflict' society. Her essay "Narratives of Post-Conflict: Memory and the Representation of Violence in Colombian Contemporary National Cinema," earned her a Mel Hoppenheim School of Cinema Award 2020–21, as well as a Concordia Graduate Mobility Award 2020–21, which allowed her to broaden her research. Her undergraduate dissertation, "Narratives and aesthetics of the Database" was granted an honorary thesis mention from University of Bogotá—Jorge Tadeo Lozano. Her work engages with the representation of violence and trauma in cinema, and argues for the cultural mediation of images, particularly as it concerns the processes of memory during the contemporary peace-building efforts of a post-conflict Colombian society.

*Visual Stories:  
Latin America in Focus*

RIAS VOL. 15, FALL–WINTER Nº 2/2022

**GIULIA MAGRO**

*Sapienza University of Rome, Italy & University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland*

### **Knight Errant to Exploring Pioneer: The Influence of Medieval Romances on the Depiction of Human and Non-Human Others in John Filson's "The Adventures of Col. Daniel Boon"**

This article analyzes, through a comparative approach, a frontier narrative, John Filson's "The Adventures of Col. Daniel Boon" (1784), in relation to selected medieval chivalric romances from an ecocritical perspective, exploring the way in which medieval patterns have been employed in the American mythopoeic process, especially in relation to the frontier and the wilderness myths. In fact, medievalist narratives have been often employed to justify an anthropocentric, expansionist, and imperialistic agenda with grievous consequences on the way in which Americans engage with nature and with nonhuman species.

At the same time, this tendency is often accompanied by an androcentric and ethnocentric rhetoric, contributing to the marginalization from dominant national discourses of significant sections of the population due to their race and gender. For this reason, attention will be also given to how attitudes toward the nonhuman can reflect and bear an impact on those toward other humans. By investigating how narratives develop, evolve, and circulate across time and space, it becomes possible to reveal the harmful logic they carry, and stress the importance of shifting the narrative in the direction of more sustainable intra- and inter-species relations.

**Keywords:** medievalism, frontier narratives, Early American literature, ecocriticism

Giulia Magro is a PhD student in Studies in English Literatures, Cultures, Language and Translation (Literary and Cultural Studies curriculum) at the Sapienza University of Rome and at the University of Silesia in Katowice. She graduated with a Master of Arts in Linguistic, Literary and Translation Studies at the Sapienza University of Rome, with a dissertation titled “The Knight Keeps Setting Forth: An Analysis of the Continuity of Medieval Chivalric Romances in American Literature.” During her Master of Arts degree, she studied abroad at the University of Cambridge in the U.K. for nine months, thanks to the Erasmus Plus program. In May 2021, she participated to the masterclass “Key Concepts in World Literature and the Environmental Humanities,” organized by the Sapienza University of Rome. During the first year of her PhD, currently in progress, she has taken part in multiple seminars at Sapienza University of Rome and attended the course “Intellectual Property Law” organized by the University of Silesia (Katowice). Her research interests include the impact of medievalism on American literature and culture, focusing in particular on speculative fiction and science fiction, and ecocritical and posthumanist approaches.

**LISA MARCHI**

*University of Trento, Italy*

### **An Intimate, Cosmopolitan Bookcase: Reflecting with Rabih Alameddine on (World) Literature**

What is a classic? To what extent are books and book collections endangered goods? What is the role and meaning of literature and translation in times of hardship? In *An Unnecessary Woman* (2013), Rabih Alameddine addresses these questions, while also indirectly contesting traditional canonical practices based on rigid hierarchies and the logic of national and linguistic purity. Alameddine highlights the violence inscribed in the practices of book selection and canon formation. In doing so, he troubles perceived notions of the canon, the classics, and especially of world literature, offering an alternative conceptu-

alization of this long-debated category as an intimate, cosmopolitan assemblage of worldly texts.

**Keywords:** world literature, intimacy, cosmopolitanism, decolonial praxis, anti-authoritarianism

Lisa Marchi teaches US Literature at the University of Trento, Italy, with a special focus on global interconnections, particularly between the US, Europe, and the Arab world. Lisa has published articles in international peer-reviewed journals, such as *Comparative Literature Studies*, *Canadian Literature*, and *Ácoma*, as well as essays in edited volumes. She is the author of *In filigrana. Poesia arabo-americana scritta da donne* (La scuola di Pitagora, 2020), the first monograph written in Italian on contemporary Arab-American poetry. Her latest book *The Funambulists: Women Poets of the Arab Diaspora* was released by Syracuse University Press in September 2022.

#### **GUSTAVO RACY**

*University of Antwerp, Belgium*

#### **Of Cannibals and Witches: Monstrosity and Capitalism at the Onset of Colonial Visual Culture**

This article provides preliminary insight into the creation of colonial visual culture. Using visual examples, the author shows how the encounter between European and Amerindian was, at first, apparently deprived of moral judgement, later being increasingly signified through moral and physical monstrosity, especially the female body, which served as an apparatus to assure colonial dominion. Looking mostly at the works of Liègeois artist Theodor de Bry, the author shows how increasing female protagonism may have helped to coin a proper visual culture that mirrored the development of productive force in early capitalism. Assuming that the European colonizer in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was still highly informed by Medieval culture, the author quickly retraces how the New World was imagined through cartography, following to the first depictions of the Amerindian and, finally, focusing on de Bry's work and an argument on capitalism and how visual culture may help us understand its process.

**Keywords:** cannibalism, hexes, monstrosity, capitalism, Theodor de Bry, Brazilian visual culture

Born in São Paulo, Brazil, in 1988, Dr. Racy holds a BA in Social Sciences and in Philosophy. He was awarded his PhD in Social Sciences in 2018 by the University of Antwerp, funded by the Ministry of Education of Brazil. His research interest is the intersection of historical materialism, visual culture, social anthropology, and the philosophy of social sciences. He is currently preparing a post-doc proposal on the role of images in contemporary culture, aiming to explore several cases, from analog to digital culture, from photography to ethnographic cinema, and from literature to cinematic adaptation. His latest research focused on the relation between the city, photography, and modernity,

approached in two distinct 19th century cases: the works of Edmond Fierlants in Antwerp and of Militão Augusto de Azevedo in São Paulo. The study invites important considerations on the role of visual technology in the building of meaning for the social world, specifically in a materialist perspective. The study articulates the relation between economy and culture, knowledge, and power.

**EMILIANA RUSSO**

*Sapienza University of Rome, Italy & University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland*

**Original Pronunciation and the United States: The Case of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by Paul Meier (2010, 2012)**

In 2004, *Romeo and Juliet* in Original Pronunciation (OP) was staged at Shakespeare's Globe, inaugurating what Crystal would later define the OP movement (2016), which aimed to restore the original sound of both the literary and non-literary works of the past. While academic literature suggests an irregular theatrical interest in the Shakespearean OP in the UK, it also demonstrates that such restoration projects have proven increasingly appealing to US audiences. The reasons why North American theatergoers are attracted to the Shakespearean OP remain unclear. Based on a qualitative analysis of interviews with Paul Meier, the director of the theatrical and radio production *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2010, 2012) and two of his cast members, and complementing the findings with the study of promotional and non-promotional articles concerning the productions, this paper sheds light on the rationale behind the North American fascination with the Shakespearean OP. As Meier's reflections gravitate towards the identity of the US as a former British colony, this study, relying extensively on literature review, is carried out both through the lens of literary/cultural history and of historical linguistics. Finally, though limited in its scope, this paper paves the way for further studies on the relationship between the allure of the OP and American culture, and thereby to enrich the area of investigation concerning Shakespeare's reception in the US and his role in American culture.

**Keywords:** Original Pronunciation, theatrical production, radio production, Paul Meier, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Shakespeare studies, Transatlantic American Studies

Emiliana Russo is a PhD student at Sapienza University in Rome and at the University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland. She holds a BA in English and German Languages and Literatures from the University of Naples L'Orientale, and an MA in Translation, Linguistic, and Literary Studies from Sapienza University of Rome. In 2016, she was granted a research scholarship with the Globe Theatre in London. In 2018, she was a recipient of the FLTA scholarship (Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant Program) and, between September 2019 and May 2020, she was a Senior Language Fellow at Susquehanna University in Pennsylvania. Her main interests are Shakespeare's reconstructed pronunciation, literary linguistics, and L2 Italian.

*Visual Stories:  
Latin America in Focus  
RIAS Vol. 15,  
Fall–Winter,  
Nº 2/2022*

**BÉRTOLD SALAS-MURILLO**

*University of Costa Rica, Costa Rica*

### **Images to Remember. Nostalgia and Hegemonic Identities in *Italia 90: The Movie***

The reconstruction of the past and memory is examined in the feature film *Italia 90: The Movie* (2014) by Miguel Gómez, which depicts the first participation of a Costa Rican team in a World Cup. The analysis includes the narrative, visual, and sound operations with which the past and memory are recreated (... or created), as well as the ways in which the story involves the viewers, particularly those who remember the episode. It is explained that, although the story resorts to certain topics of sports cinema, it is presented more as an adventure of the community, which would eventually include an entire country, and favors the exploration of the intimate over the epic. *Italia 90: The Movie* appeals to nostalgia, through recognizable images and sounds, as well as figures anchored in the hegemonic Costa Rican imaginary (such as the "common peasant"), to narrate an episode that, in addition to being central in the history of sports in Costa Rica, it is among the events that symbolically mark the country's entry into the globalized world.

**Keywords:** football, national hero, memory, nostalgia, Costa Rican cinema, identity

Bértold Salas-Murillo is Professor of Film Studies at the University of Costa Rica. He has a Masters in Cinematography from University of Costa Rica and a PhD in Literature and Arts of the Stage and the Screen (Littérature et arts de la scène et de l'écran) from Laval University, Canada. He is the assistant director of the Postgraduate in Arts of the University of Costa Rica. His recent publications include "Forging Her Path with Her Own Fists: Autonomy and Contradictions of Age, Class and Gender in Florence Jaugey's *La Yuma/Yuma* (2010)," "La intermedialidad: las oportunidades y los riesgos de un concepto en boga," "Un hoy que se narra a la sombra del ayer. El cine costarricense y la inquietud por el tiempo," "Los subterfugios digitales de Jafar Panahi," and "Entre la scène et l'écran. Le parcours intermédiaire dans l'œuvre de Robert Lepage," among others.

**BEATRIZ TORRES INSÚA**

*Independent Scholar, Austria*

### **Conservación de patrimonio cultural mueble vs. conservación fílmica**

Los conservadores están preparados para tratar diferentes tipos de objetos; sin embargo, se necesita un grado de especialización particular para trabajar con determinados artefactos. Las películas cinematográficas requieren determinados conocimientos, herramientas y equipo para su manipulación. A diferencia de otros objetos del patrimonio cultural, su aprehensión no se da únicamente mirando

*Visual Stories:  
Latin America in Focus*

RIAS VOL. 15, FALL-WINTER Nº 2/2022



el objeto fílmico, sino viendo la película proyectada y viviendo la experiencia cinematográfica. El propósito de este proyecto fue dictaminar el estado de conservación de una película aplicando la metodología utilizada en la conservación de objetos del patrimonio cultural “tradicional” como: documentos gráficos, fotografías, pinturas, esculturas, etc. El objeto cinematográfico se titula *Cine Revista Salvadoreña* y pertenece al acervo de la Filмотeca de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.

**Palabras clave:** patrimonio cultural, objeto fílmico, conservación fílmica, estado de conservación.

Conservators deal with different kind of objects; nevertheless, a particular degree of specialization is needed to work with certain artifacts. Motion picture film requires determined expertise, tools, and equipment for its manipulation. Unlike other objects of cultural heritage, apprehension does not occur only by looking at the film object, but also by seeing the projected film and living the cinematographic experience. The purpose of this project was to assess the state of conservation of a film by applying the methodology used in the conservation of objects of “traditional” cultural heritage, such as graphic documents, photographs, paintings, and sculptures. The film object is titled *Cine Revista Salvadoreña* and belongs to the collection of the Filмотeca of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.

**Keywords:** cultural heritage, film object, filmic preservation, conservation.

Beatriz Torres Insúa was born in born in Mexico City and since 2011 has been located in Austria. She works in the area of photo, film, and paper conservation and restoration. She has experience in the cultural, governmental, and private sector.

*Visual Stories:  
Latin America in Focus  
RIAS Vol. 15,  
Fall–Winter,  
Nº 2/2022*

