

José Juan Olvera Gudiño

The Dimensions of Sound: Music, Frontier and Identity

This work explores the construction of social identities in the northeastern region of Mexico and in the southeast of the United States building on the accounts and classificatory systems exposed by “experts” in the field of popular music. The main idea is to follow the construction process of difference and identity from the vision of what separates and unites Texan and *norteña* music. The concepts of North, sociocultural region and border appear and are discussed in this essay, as well as the role that they play in this process.

Elijah Wald

Ángel González: The Father of Camelia

This article is part of a study that musician and scholar Elijah Wald has devoted to the history of *Narcorrido*, which may be seen as a Mexican equivalent of US country music. The piece focuses on the origins of this musical tradition, which took off in the 1950s in the border areas between the USA and Mexico as a new development of the classic *corrido* and focusing on stories of drug smugglers. Using an on-the-road narrative style, Wald reports on his encounter with musician Ángel Gonzales, who is considered the real “father” of *Narcocorrido*. The article retraces the steps of Ángel’s career through important collaborations with major names of the *norteña music* like Joe Flores and Los Tigres del Norte, who recorded his great hit “*Contrabando y Traición*”, one of the first and most popular *narcocorridos* ever written.

Michele Dal Lago

We’re not the jet set: Country Music and Class Identity

The history of country music is deeply intertwined with the social and cultural evolution of its working-class audiences. This article focuses on two key issues: the relation between country music and the southernization of the American working class, from the southern diaspora to the rise of the Sun Belt; and the cross-class perceptions of social classes in country music’s lyrics. Attention is paid to the political consequences of their miscomprehension by progressive social movements in the U.S. The article also examines the ideological function of poverty pride and resentment in recent country music’s poetics, trying to clarify how this reaction to cultural humiliation affects the perception of class boundaries within the national discourse.

Pietro Bianchi

“Weed and syrup, ‘til I die”: The Trap Scene and the Death Drive

The generation of African-American kids born after the decline of the black movements of the Sixties expressed the impasses of the lack of social mobility of the 80s and 90s through self-destructive, violent and nihilistic practices (gang violence, substance abuse etc.). In the last 10-15 years several hip hop acts from Southern states of the US were the witnesses and narrators of these practices of introversion of violence, i.e. a complex social process through which black social antagonism has been depoliticized and substituted with self-centered practices of toxic

and lethal enjoyment (what the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan called "jouissance" or death drive). *Trap*, a hip hop sub-genre born in Atlanta in the Nineties and now famous all over the world, managed to express this feeling of "being trapped" – both in an existential and social sense – through repetitive and paranoid beats and the use of the autotuned and distorted voice that tells stories of drugs, sex and self-destruction. Far from being mere social witnesses, Gucci Mane, Future, Boosie Badazz, Rick Ross and Lil Wayne not only managed to vividly describe a complex social dynamics, but also expressed their own way of dealing with such an excessive and lethal enjoying-drive and to express it in an artistic form.

Alessandro Portelli

Love, Theft and Repetition: A Few Notes on Some Aspects of Bob Dylan's Poetics

The paper compares Dylan's relationship to his folk, literary and pop sources at different stages of his career and of his artistic development. In "A Hard Rain's a-Gonna Fall", Dylan explicitly refers to a classic ballad from the oral tradition, "Lord Randal", but rereads it through a modernistic, post-atomic apocalyptic imagination that owes a great deal also to his (implicit) reading of symbolist poetry, from Blake to Rimbaud. At a later stage, in *Love and Theft*, Dylan makes explicit reference to the minstrel show tradition of appropriation and parody of the black tradition, and of literary and folk sources. The references, however, are estranged through the

use of allusion, signifyin', quotation/ parody, repetition. Quoting the famous exchange about the repetition of the past in *The Great Gatsby* Dylan suggests that all repetition is variation, that all appropriation is inevitably distortion and change.

Fabrizio Tonello

Elections 2016: A Long-term Interpretation

This article looks at the historical context of Donald Trump's success. One popular theory is that all the rules "about how you win an election (outspend your opponent, build a better organization, lead in polling, run more TV ads) [were] disproved in one fell swoop on Nov. 8". This is also the opinion of political scientist Larry Sabato, who has given this title to a volume about the campaign: *Trumped: The 2016 Election That Broke All the Rules*. While it is certainly true that Trump was an unconventional candidate, we will show that his victory didn't come from his "smashing the rules" of political campaigns but from long-term processes related to deep cleavages in American society.

The article will discuss the role of partisanship in Trump's victory (both parties' share of the popular vote in 2016 was highly correlated with their share in 2012) and the cleavages revealed by this election: geography, income and education. We will also address the "Clinton-was-a-bad-candidate" theory: it was political tribalisation, not the quality of candidates the key factor in the outcome of this election.

Rosa Fioravante

The Hegemonic Attempt of Bernie Sanders: From the Democratic Party Presidential Primaries to His Opposition to Trump

Bernie Sanders' candidacy to the 2016 primaries of the Democratic Party has brought in the public debate an original position on most of the topics discussed during the months preceding the general elections. This paper examines Bernie Sanders's eccentric profile, being a self-described socialist and an Independent, in relation with the Democratic Party, arguing whether his view was uneasy to fit in that context. It presents the Senator's proposal on regulating Wall Street and his strong opposition to the neoliberal economic system. Hillary Clinton will arguably fail to take full advantage of Sanders's support, which was overwhelmingly composed by young people and white middle class, due to the profound differences between the two candidates' biographies and platforms. This article will then present a short description of Sanders' related association "Our Revolution" and its attempts to build an anti-Trump progressive movement and to influence the last congress of the Democratic Party. The Senator's candidacy will be further discussed in the light of a wider debate taking place among pundits and scholars on the opportunity of Sanders's choice of an "economic populism" strategy opposed to an "identity liberalism" one.

President Trump's Immigration Strategy

The 2016 U.S. Presidential Campaign polarized the nation over the issue of immigration. The Republican candidate, Donald Trump, rallied voters with promises to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border, increase efforts to deport undocumented immigrants and halt the flow of Muslims into America. Within a week of his inauguration, he signed executive orders tightening immigration policy. This quantitative and qualitative analysis evaluates immigration coverage of Latinos and Muslims on 106 programs appearing on the top-rated cable news programs that aired on CNN, MSNBC, and FOX News during key events preceding the executive orders. It finds Trump's policy reflected in the traditional political leanings of each network, which in turns mirrors partisan beliefs on immigration within recent nationwide polls. Despite overt attempts to redefine the context of immigration messages, the analysis found that all networks failed to provide in-depth coverage of the implications of such policies, preferring panels of partisan guests and political analysts to in-depth reports. In addition, both cable news hosts and guests repeatedly displayed disillusionment over whether Trumps' platform was a true objective or an exaggeration.

Manuel Chavez and Carin Tunney

Disillusion and Divide: How American TV Cable News Framed

Pilar Martínez Benedi

Sounds Lost to (or, Recovered in) the Ear: Factuality, Intensity, and the Transmission of the Affect in Herman Melville's *Typee*

Although *Typee* is purportedly a "narrative of facts" that describes an autobiographical experience, critics and readers have often noticed "the taint of fiction" in Melville's first novel. This essay considers the gap between fact and fiction through the lenses of Brian Massumi's distinction between "content" and "effect" or "intensity," so as to assess the impact of Melville's multisensory and cross-modal imagery on the transmission of affect. *Typee's* "Preface" announces the author's intention to "speak the unvarnished truth" – but he likewise states his interest in conveying the "beautiful [...] vocal sounds" that are "lost to the ear". The essay examines how in *Typee* the ear is the vehicle of an undifferentiated intensity that cannot be contained by visual and categorical forms. I discuss the ways in which the "sensory narrative" affects the "factual narrative" puts pressure on accepted notions of cognitive failure, suggesting instead an approach to experience that is less interested in the "unvarnished truth" than in recovering what is "lost to the ear."

Massimo Cisternino

Emerson's Philosophy in Italian and American Criticism: From Transcendentalism to Pragmatism

This essay gives an overview of the ways in which Emerson's philosophy has been interpreted by

Italian and American scholars over the years. It highlights the general differences between a Transcendentalist and Pragmatist interpretation of his work and describes how his views on individualism and democracy became part of the Pragmatist debate on social and political commitment. The main purpose of this essay is to emphasize the diversities between the Italian and American approach towards Emerson's philosophy. By giving prominence to the contributions by Italian scholars, we can provide a more comprehensive interpretation of his thought, which will help integrating Emerson's Transcendentalist views on religion with his proto-pragmatist claims.

Vincenza Mele and Simona Giardina

Toni Morrison's *Beloved*: Ethics and Narration between Psychology and Tragedy

The article examines the novel *Beloved* by the African American writer Toni Morrison. The authors provide a reading of the novel from the perspectives of both ethics and narration. The narration is intended, first of all, as suffering coming from the evil done, and it assumes both a "private dimension" in the case of the personal suffering experienced by Sethe, the murderer mother; and a "political dimension" related to the *polis* when the community accepts Sethe into its bosom, after recognizing her personal journey of atonement.

The political narration is mostly the historical memory the American people have of the sixty millions, or even more, slaves dead during the Middle Passage, to whom the writer dedicates the novel. The narration is, mostly, the story of

the relationship between mother and child: *Beloved* is considered as a paradigmatic example of maternal narrative, because it narrates the mother and child relationship in the pre-oedipal stage, showing its deepest and most ambivalent sides.

Marco Malvestio

"Everything can't be a lie": Philip Roth and the Holocaust

The focus of this article is the presence of Holocaust memory in four works by Philip Roth, in order to consider his whole career: *Goodbye, Columbus* (1959), the *Zuckerman Bound* trilogy (1979-1983), *Operation Shylock* (1993) and *The Plot Against America* (2005). The article concerns two main topics: the relation between the importance of memory as a source of identity and the trivialization of Holocaust in contemporary culture; and the different approach to this subject between the postmodern phase of Roth's production (mainly *Operation Shylock*) and the return to conventional realism in the 2000s.