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CENTRE FOR
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PANDEMIC, CRISIS,

and Modern
Studies

Twitter

Conference

#cmodspan2020



12 June 2020, Friday
9:30 – 19:00 (BST)

Pandemic, Crisis, and Modern Studies

Twitter Conference

(#cmodspan2020)

Countervoices Centre for Modern Studies

June 12th, 2020

All times are in British Summer Time.

Opening Remarks

9.30: JT Welsch (@jtwelsch) & Countervoices (@cmodspgforum1)
Centre for Modern Studies, The University of York

Panel 1: Dystopia, Cities, Literature, Apocalypse

9.40: “‘Even So Quickly May One Catch the Plague?’ Plague as a Metaphor in Literature and Culture”

Prema Arasu (@prema_arasu)
University of Western Australia

9.55: "Imagined Realities: How Truthful is the Presentation of Pandemic Graffiti in Cinema?"

Emma Bryning (@EmmaVBryning)
University of York

10.10: "COVID-19 and the Hyper-Nearing of the Dystopia"

Zahra Rizvi (@zaaraofthesea)
Jamia Milia Islamia

10.25: "Apocalypse in the Time of COVID-19"

Heloise Thomas (@akafferez) Bordeaux Montaigne University

10.40: Q&A

Keynote

11.00: Pandemic Temporalities: Crisis, Curve, Crip

Beryl Pong (@berylpong)
The University of Sheffield

11.20: Q&A

Break 11.30 -12.00

Panel 2: Death and the Human Body

12.00: ‘The Sunlight Almost Touched Me’: The Horrors of Physical Travel in E. M. Forster’s ‘The Machine Stops’

Nour Dakkak (@dakkaknour8)
Arab Open University

12.15: The ‘Pandemic’ and the ‘Non-Pandemic’ Dead Bodies: the Indian context

Khyati Tripathi (@khyati_tripathi)
University of Delhi

12.30: Stigmatizing COVI-Deaths

Swati Joshi (@JoshiSwati1992)
Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar

12.45: Q&A

Lunch 13.00-14.30

Keynote

14.30: Loneliness in the Time of COVID-19

Fay Bound Alberti (@fboundalberti)
University of York

14.50: Q&A

Panel 3: Space, Place and Immigration

15.00: The Erasure, Overlapping and Coalescing of Private and Professional Space in the Pandemic Crisis 2020

Stuti Goswami (@GoswamiStuti)

Royal Global University

15.15: Homesick at Home: Social distancing and in Situ Displacement

Huw Halstead (@DrabbleHistory)

University of St. Andrews

15.30: Q&A

Break 15.45 - 16.00

Panel 4: Changing the Conversation

16.00: Language of Communication in the Post Corona World

Asha Choubey (@asha_choubey)

MJP Rohilkhand University

16.15: Childhood Cancer During the Time of COVID- 19

Robin L. Rohrer (@rohrer_robin)

Seton Hill University

16.30: Not the Conversation we Hoped to be Having: How the Pandemic has Changed Death Studies in America

Jordan A. Savage (@jalexiss19)

University of Arkansas

16.45: Q&A

Panel 5: Aesthetics

17.00: Charleston Queer COVID Crisis

Kelsey Carper (@kelsey_carper)

University of Florida

17.15: Comparative Analytic Aesthetics and Choice in Covid-19 Artworks

Christopher Hubbard (@chrs220)

17.30: Making Craft and War: COVID-19 and the War-Related, Craft Therapies of Americans since ca. 1914

Jennifer Way (@jenniferwayphd1)

University of North Texas

17.45: Q&A

Panel 6: Teaching and Learning

18.00: Teaching Past Pandemics: the History of Disease and its Implications for Student Learning during the COVID-19 Outbreak

Caitlin Fendley (@CaitBFendley)

Purdue University

18.15: More and More Every Day: an Oral History Collection of Teaching and Learning in the COVID-19 Era

Summer Cherland (@SMCChistory)

South Mountain Community College

18.30: Contagious Forgetting: Pandemic, Memory, and the Material Objects of COVID-19"

Graeme Calloway (@ChirpingGraeme)

Tufts University

18.45: Q&A

19.00: End

9.30 – 9.40 Opening Remarks:

JT Welsch (@jtwelsch) & Countervoices (@cmodspgforum1)

Centre for Modern Studies

The University of York

9.40 - 11.00 Panel 1: Dystopia, Cities, Literature, Apocalypse

9.40: 'Even So Quickly May One Catch the Plague?' Plague as a Metaphor in Literature and Culture.

Prema Arasu (@prema_arasu)

University of Western Australia

In the medical treatises of the Medieval and Early Modern period, the physiological effects of plague become inseparable from notions of social and moral decay, and the term 'plague' is laden with connotations. Shakespeare uses the term 'plague' to refer to a number of degenerative conditions including infatuation, social degeneracy, and ill-will. More modern texts, such as Albert Camus' *The Plague* draw upon this long history and use the disease as both political metaphor and plot device. Michel Foucault refers to the city in the time of plague as 'the utopia of the perfectly governed city' where perfect disciplines functioned. With reference to tuberculosis and cancer, Susan Sontag problematises the figurative language used to refer to the lived experience of sickness in *Illness as Metaphor*, and reveals the extent to which disease is culturally constructed. At the beginning of 2019 Prema Arasu started a PhD in creative writing. Prema's novel is a high fantasy set in a city struck by plague, and explores the various negotiations of power that occur in a time of crisis within a biopolitical framework. This tweet thread will explore how the ongoing pandemic has impacted and inspired Prema's writing, and prompted questioning of the ethics of using plague as a metaphor. Furthermore, this tweet series will discuss the ways in which cultural constructions of plague, and the term's inextricability from its metaphorical dimensions, have impacted the way we talk about our bodies in the current pandemic.

Prema Arasu is a PhD Candidate in Creative Writing at the University of Western Australia. They hold a BA(Hons) from UWA and an MLitt from the University of St. Andrews. Their research is primarily in fantasy literature with a focus on the representation, construction, and performance of gender in alternate worlds.

10.55: Imagined Realities: How Truthful is the Presentation of Pandemic Graffiti in Cinema?

Emma Bryning (@EmmaVBryning)

University of York

From *Metropolis* to *La Jetée*, *Mad Max* to *Children of Men*, filmmakers have been interested in depicting dystopian and post-apocalyptic landscapes, and societies' reactions to them, throughout cinematic history. These visions and our imagined reactions have become an important part of cinematic language. A subset of this genre are films which deal with depicting infectious disease outbreaks and pandemics, including *The Seventh Seal*, *28 Days Later* and *Contagion* to name a few. When it comes to more contemporary depictions of how societies react to pandemics and how they would react in a post-apocalyptic world, an easy visual cue to filmmakers is through the use of graffiti in the background as shorthand for social unrest. In these depictions, filmmakers allude to graffiti's illegal, anti-social and anarchic associations. The current Covid-19 pandemic has shown that graffiti can mean so much more and is often used as a sign of hope as well as despair. Across the globe, graffiti has been used as communication, for community spirit and as personal expression. How much do our fictional representations of life under a pandemic actually reflect the reality, and should graffiti also be used as code for hope in troubling times?

Emma Bryning is a PhD student in the Department of Archaeology at the University of York. Her research focuses on the contemporary significance of graffiti at historic sites, in collaboration between the University of York and English Heritage. She is also a Heritage & Community Impact Manager at the Monastery Manchester.

10:10: COVID-19 and the Hyper-Nearing of the Dystopia

Zahra Rizvi (@zaaraofthesea)

Jamia Milia Islamia

My ongoing PhD research deals with dystopia as a cultural product of a world facing its near-future apocalyptic fears. My thesis studies contemporary Young Adult dystopian fiction and its cross-platform media manifestations to critically analyse the production and consumption of the dystopia, bringing forward multi-logic articulations of the young adults that actively interact with the same. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought to the fore many of the theoretical and practical complexities of the dystopia. The consumptive audience of the near-future dystopian narrative is suddenly dealing in alarming dimensions with the present dystopia. The pandemic is already casting a long, dark shadow on any work done on the dystopia and in the future, this will not only mean a reconceptualization of the term 'dystopia' and its significations but also, any discussion of the dystopia would be incomplete without a mention of the pandemic to the very least. There is already a tsunami of critical material surfacing everywhere about the pandemic, and comparisons to other epidemics but also, interestingly, to popular literary dystopias. The common person, too, is hyper-aware of a dystopian change, the awareness of living in the 'bad place', but, maybe for the first time, in a global sense. I am currently trying to re-orient certain aspects of my research to make sense of these new considerations as well as my personal experiences of seeing the effects of COVID-19 in the U.S. and India. The scenery of lockdowns and small experiments in dealing with the medical, political and social complexities of the virus offers a new focus on dystopian cityscapes and their ways of dealing with disease and disease prevention. My presentation would work out some of the effects of COVID-19 on my own research and ruminate what it could mean for utopia/dystopia studies, in general.

Zahra Rizvi is a Ph.D. scholar at the Department of English, Jamia Millia Islamia, India. Her research interests include utopia/dystopia studies, popular culture, and geopolitical issues in and of cross-platform media. She was recently a SPARC Fellow at the Department of Linguistics and Germanic, Slavic, African and Asian Language Studies, Michigan State University, where she engaged in research in the fields of digital humanities and cultural studies. She has delivered lectures at ZHDC, University of Delhi, IIT Delhi, and Michigan State University.

10.25: Apocalypse in the Time of COVID-19

Heloise Thomas (@akafferez)

Bordeaux Montaigne University

The crisis generated by the spread of Covid-19 feels uncanny in relation to my current research, which tracks the evolution of historical consciousness and of apocalypticism in 21st-century North American literature. Drawing on contemporary philosophies of history, I show how the joint idea of “crisis” and “apocalypse” is no longer simply located in the future, as the inevitable telos of the march of progress, but has been cyclically structuring the past (colonization and genocide, chattel slavery, the Holocaust, and even to some extent the AIDS crisis). Understanding ourselves as post-apocalyptic subjects helps reassess our relationship to the past and reopen our sense of futurity which had been foreclosed by looming images of disaster. In this perspective, the 2020 pandemic illustrates the points I make in my dissertation: the ghostly materiality of the virus (which laypeople apprehend tangibly mostly through its symptoms); the constitution of knowledge and expertise against epistemological uncertainty; the barring of power dynamics and state-sanctioned authoritarian drifts; the widespread emphatic claim that Covid-19 will spur a radical (i.e. apocalyptic) break in the ways we live, consume, and relate to the world. Covid-19 forces us to confront what we mean by the end of the world (for whom?) and to ask ourselves how we want to inhabit this future.

Heloise Thomas is a PhD student in American Studies at Bordeaux Montaigne University (France). Their dissertation, “Archive, Empire, Apocalypse,” studies history in 21st-century North American literature through queer, feminist, and decolonial perspectives. Their recent or forthcoming articles discuss women’s autobiographies, lesbian representation, and poetics/politics of memory in contemporary U.S. culture.

10.40: Q&A

11.00 – 11.30 Keynote

Pandemic Temporalities: Crisis, Curve, Crip

Beryl Pong (@berylpong)

The University of Sheffield

Dr Beryl Pong is a Vice-Chancellor's Fellow in English at the University of Sheffield. She is the author of *British Literature and Culture in Second World Wartime: For the Duration* (Oxford University Press, 2020), as well as numerous articles on war and time in *Modernism/modernity*, *Journal of Modern Literature*, and *Literature & History*, among other venues. She is a commissioning editor for the "Modernist Geographies" section of *Literature Compass*, an executive committee member of the British Association of Modernist Studies, and the Sheffield lead supervisor on the White Rose College of Arts & Humanities (WRoCAH) network, "Electronic Soundscapes". She is the current holder of a British Academy Rising Star Engagement Award for the project, "The Aesthetics of Drone Warfare" (2019-2021).

11.20: Q&A

11.30: Break

12.00 – 13 00 Panel 2: Death and the Human Body

12.00: ‘The Sunlight Almost Touched Me’: The Horrors of Physical Travel in E. M. Forster’s ‘The Machine Stops’

Nour Dakkak (@dakkaknour8)

Arab Open University

In the past two decades, there has been a growing interest in humanities and the social sciences in the role of the nonhuman in the process of the construction and formation of human relations. The current spread of coronavirus is an ongoing example of how a quasi-living matter can displace humans and alter social interactions. In my twitter-paper, I want to demonstrate how E. M. Forster’s only science fiction short story, ‘The Machine Stops’ (1909), depicts a dystopic version of socially-distanced lives where ‘People never touched one another’ and ‘the clumsy system of public gatherings had been long since abandoned’. By giving an overview about the world of the story, and tracing the journey that Vashti undertakes to visit her son who lives on the other side of the earth, I demonstrate how movement and physical exposure to various sensory elements become the highlight of her undesirable and unusual journey. I argue that the ways in which the story explores the dystopic social norms and the characters’ reaction to changed habits are linked to Forster’s celebration of the human body and the significance of touch as essential to developing human emotions and sympathy.

Nour Dakkak is Assistant Professor of English Literature in Kuwait. Her research is interested in place-writing and mobilities in nineteenth and twentieth-century literature. She’s the co-editor of *Sandscapes: Writing the British Seaside* (Palgrave 2020) with Jo Carruthers, and *Anticipatory Materialisms in Literature and Philosophy, 1790-1930* with Jo Carruthers and Rebecca Spence (Palgrave 2020).

12.15: The 'Pandemic' and the 'Non-Pandemic' Dead Bodies: the Indian context

Khyati Tripathi (@khyati_tripathi)

University of Delhi

Being a death researcher for 11 years, I have always been fascinated with how dead bodies are 'looked at' by different people. The dead bodies are perceived to be lacking any control or 'agency' as the mourners are the ones performing rituals for the deceased and taking care of the funeral (Tripathi, 2014). We, as mourners, perceive the lifeless body as vulnerable and unable to act on the environment. But we fail to understand that it is the dead body that exerts its power, control and agency through the rituals being executed by the mourners on its behalf, i.e., it doesn't act, rather it makes 'the alive bodies' around it act. With the coming of the COVID-19 pandemic, the way 'infected' dead bodies exert their agency has changed. In the context of Hinduism, the identity markers that stay with the deceased are his/her religion, age and sex because these three determine what death rituals would be followed. For the COVID bodies, on the other hand, religion and the COVID infection remain as the primary identity markers. 'Religion', because in India that determines whether the body would be cremated or buried and the 'infection' because that guides the funeral process and the associated precautions. My contention in this paper is to bring to the fore the comparison between the non-pandemic and the pandemic dead bodies through a psychosocial framework; and how these two kinds of bodies exert their power, agency and control on the society at large.

Khyati Tripathi is a Senior Research Fellow in the Department of Psychology at the University of Delhi, India. She was awarded the prestigious Commonwealth split-site PhD (2016-17). She recently submitted her PhD thesis which focuses on the cultural construction of the dead in Hinduism and Judaism through culture-specific death rituals and mortuary techniques.

12.30: Stigmatizing COVI-Deaths

Swati Joshi (@JoshiSwati1992)

Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar

In this paper, I intend to discuss the stigma associated with the dead bodies of the infected patients. While on one hand, COVID-19 survivors are valorized as the victorious who have succeeded at defeating the novel coronavirus, on the other hand the ones who have been battling the disease have been turned into numerical data only being kept alive digitally. But most importantly they are viewed as a contagious matter that needs to be isolated, sanitized, and carefully disposed. Under the present circumstances the ones who have lost their lives to the infection are not only denied the conventional rituals of funeral, but they are also being seen as a problem to deal with. At this point, it becomes important to contemplate how a society that has always been accusing Medicine of viewing patients as suffering bodies is itself discriminating between non-contagious and contagious bodies, between bodies residing in green, orange and red zones. The dead bodies of the infected are not even permitted, by several communities, to be buried or cremated at the graveyards and cemeteries near the residential areas. There are reports of temporary mobile morgues set up for storing the dead bodies, till the government authorities find a rational and “convincing” method for their disposal. Thus, it becomes vital to reflect on how the virus has been influencing the society’s gaze darted at the individuals.

Swati Joshi is pursuing her doctoral studies in Medical Humanities at the Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar. Prior to joining her PhD, she was working as a Lecturer of English Language and Literature at St. Xavier’s College Ahmedabad.

12.45: Q&A

13.00: Lunch

Keynote

14.30: "Loneliness in the Time of COVID-19"

Fay Bound Alberti (@fboundalberti)

University of York

Dr Fay Bound Alberti works on the histories of medicine, gender, emotion and the body. Her books include *Medicine, Emotion and Disease, 1700-1950* (ed., 2006); *Matters of the Heart: History, Medicine and Emotion* (2010) *This Mortal Coil: The Human Body in History and Culture* (2016) and *Germs and Governance: The Past, Present and Future of Hospital Infection Prevention and Control* (ed. with Anne Marie Rafferty and Marguerite Dupree, 2019) Fay's book on the history of loneliness - *A Biography of Loneliness: The History of an Emotion* - was published by Oxford University Press in 2019. Fay was awarded one of the first round of UKRI Future Leaders Fellowships for her work on the emotional and cultural history of face transplants. Fay is a Foundation Futures Leaders Fellow at the Foundation of Science and Technology, and a Reader in History at the University of York, where she is also co-Director of the Centre for Global Health Histories.

14.50: Q&A

Panel 3: Space, Place and Immigration

15.00: The Erasure, Overlapping and Coalescing of Private and Professional Space in the Pandemic Crisis 2020

Stuti Goswami (@GoswamiStuti)

Royal Global University

The COVID-19 pandemic that has held the entire world across the social-cultural-economic and political spectrum in its grip, has suddenly made Work from Home (WFH) imminent and essential. Though as a concept WFH had been seen to become an increasingly preferable and desirable, the pandemic crisis has rendered WFH a matter beyond human choice. As a consequence, the personal and professional spaces are being transformed and/or altered with the changing circumstances, consequently leading to increasing blurring of the borders demarcating these spaces. This paper would explore the questions of erasure, overlapping and/or coalescing of personal and professional spaces in the context of the COVID 19 pandemic crisis.

Stuti Goswami is an Assistant Professor at the Department of English, Royal School of Languages, Royal Global University, Guwahati, and has about nine years of experience of teaching in various capacities at the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in several colleges and universities. She has recently submitted her PhD thesis on “Jyotiprasad Agarwalla’s Contribution to the Culture of Assamese Modernity with Particular Reference to His Plays” at the Department of English, Gauhati University. Apart from this, she is a bilingual writer and translator and has been widely published in different newspapers, magazines and journals including *The Sentinel*, *The Assam Tribune*, *The Times of India*, *MuseIndia*, *Silhouette*, *Indian Review*, *Café Dissensus*, *Satsari*, *Prakash*, *Dainik Janasadharan*, among others and has chapters in several books in English and Assamese languages. She has co-edited an anthology of biographical essays by leading Assamese writer Munin Barkotoki titled *Essentially Speaking: Biographical Snapshots* (2015) published by Gauhati University Press and another co edited anthology, *Warp and Weft: Makers of Modern Assam* (2019) published by National Book Trust of India. She is currently translating an Assamese novel *Singhadwar* by Bhaskar Thakuria to English and is working on a collected translation of Jyotiprasad Agarwalla’s plays. She has also begun work on a biography of Nabakanta Barua.

15.15: Homesick at Home: Social distancing and in Situ Displacement

Huw Halstead (@DrabbleHistory)

University of St. Andrews

Place loss is commonly associated with spatial dislocation: it is assumed that loss of place happens only or primarily when people are physically displaced from a point of origin. Yet, as my research into land reclamation in central Greece (History & Anthropology 2020) demonstrates, people can – without moving anywhere – experience in situ displacement when major and rapid changes occur to their natural and cultural landscape and to the markers of everyday familiarity, disrupting local inhabitants' corporeal and sensory relationship to place. In this Twitter paper, I apply these insights to the current necessity for 'social distancing' and the injunction to 'stay at home'. I explore how this situation may denude local places of much of their affective significance through the loss of familiar faces, sights, sounds, smells, and routes. No longer able to walk wherever and whenever we please, and instead meandering across a circumscribed landscape within a theoretical two metre self-exclusion zone, we may struggle to perform the 'walking rhetorics' that Michel de Certeau (1984) saw as constitutive of spatial meaning. This, I argue, underlines both the social underpinnings of place identity and the need for prolonged social distancing strategies to take into account sense of place.

Dr Huw Halstead is a Research Fellow in the School of History at St Andrews. His research deals with memory, place, public history, and everyday life, with a particular focus on the Mediterranean world and former Ottoman territories. He is author of *Greeks without Greece* (Routledge, 2019).

15.30: Q&A

Break: 15.45

16.00 -17.00 Panel 4: Changing the Conversation

16.00: Language of Communication in the Post Corona World

Asha Choubey (@asha_choubey)

MJP Rohilkhand University

When you come out of the storm, you won't be the same person who walked in. That's what this storm's all about, says Haruki Murakami. Covid-19 has been more than a storm. Naturally then, the world culture will see a complete transformation in its aftermath. Life in all its imaginable aspects will not be the same again. In times of social media when one was more connected than ever, Covid dictates new terms and conditions for a healthy living. Staying home is the norm; washing hands every hour does not make you Lady Macbeth anymore; hospitality does not find a place in society; social networking gives way to social distancing; keeping your face veiled is the best practice in a liberal world. Such a drastic paradigm shift in human life is bound to result in a rediscovery of the norms of communication. My paper shall seek to explore the Corona induced new vocabulary that has mushroomed in the Covid infested world. Another major concern would be to see the patterns of communication that the world needs to devise to be able to cope with the dis-communication that a Post Corona world shall witness.

Dr. Asha Choubey is Professor of English and Head of the Department of Humanities at MJP Rohilkhand University, Bareilly. Her interest lies in the areas of ELT, Feminism, Post colonial Literature and Indian English Fiction. Her books *Women on Women*, *Womancing Women*, *Righting the Wrong*, and *The Fictional Milieu of Nayantara Sahgal* have been very well received. She has been published by such International houses as Sage, Routledge, Facts on File, Greenwood and prestigious journals like *Linguistics and Literature Studies*, USA; *Apple Valley Review*, USA; *Quiet Mountain Essays*, USA; *Literary Paritantra*, India; *Rupkatha*, India and many others. Dr. Choubey has been a visiting fellow at the Dept. of Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies, Eotvos Lorand University, Budapest, Hungary. She has been an invited resource person in many reputed universities in India and abroad.

16.15: Childhood Cancer During the Time of COVID-19

Robin L. Rohrer (@rohrer_robin)

Seton Hill University

My research focuses on the experience of survivorship in children who have had cancer treatment. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the pediatric cancer community in several significant ways. The major impacts of the pandemic are: issues with access to treatment, shortages of chemotherapy drugs, canceled scans and tests, curtailing of parent visits, and access to clinical trials. Currently I am exploring published articles, social media and news releases from both the medical community and parent groups. These include, but are not limited to, the Children's Oncology Group, the International Society Pediatric Oncology and the National Children's Cancer Society. At this time of lockdown and social distancing, all groups involved in the support of children with cancer in the United States are gravely concerned with the medical impact of the pandemic. There is great concern and even outrage concerning the impact of COVID-19 on immunocompromised children. The psycho social impact is also significant. Increased trauma and fear of recurrences, delays in treatment and further family isolation, are both short and probably long term consequences for these families.

Robin L. Rohrer - I am a Professor of History at Seton Hill University with a focus on the history of medicine (PhD, The Catholic University of America). My research focus is on survivorship issues of children with cancer since the 1970s. I am the parent of a childhood cancer survivor.

16.30: Not the Conversation we Hoped to be Having: How the Pandemic has Changed Death Studies in America

Jordan A. Savage (@jalexiss19)

University of Arkansas

The call to action in Sunita Puri's New York Times article "It's Time to Talk About Death" urges Americans to have important and often neglected conversations about their own and their loved ones' death plans in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. This global pandemic has crafted an even more surreal experience out of death and mourning. It is keeping family members out of the hospital rooms of dying patients, forcing nurses to facetime a patient's death to their family, and moving funeral services to minimal attendees (if any) visitations are being live-streamed or hosted in a drive-by fashion. Death activists and death scholars have long been advocating for more open and honest conversations about death as well as progress where the sustainability of death and funerals can be discussed. This is not the conversation we hoped to be having nor the reason we hoped the public at large would finally be talking about death. My twitter conference submission would examine and exhibit these changes and consider the long lasting impact this could have on death culture in America for the future.

Jordan A. Savage is a doctoral candidate at the University of Arkansas, pursuing her PhD as a Doctoral Academy Fellow and recipient of the Diane Blair Fellowship for the Study of Southern Literature. Her current research and writing for her dissertation is heavily influenced by death studies and death activism. Her intellectual pursuits also include a focus on gender and southern literature.

16.45: Q&A

17.00 – 18.00 Panel 5: Aesthetics

17.00: Charleston Queer COVID Crisis

Kelsey Carper (@kelsey_carper)

University of Florida

With the formation of the Charleston Trust in 1980, the home of Bloomsbury artists, Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant, became a monument to the lives once lived there. Before visitors and tourists would crowd these spaces, Charleston Farmhouse was a sanctuary for its occupants, offering asylum from a war-torn Britain that criticized, and frequently ostracized, those who did not conform to societal standards of gender or sexuality. Charleston Farmhouse was a liberated space that provided artistic inspiration and validation to the members of Bloomsbury that did not subscribe to a heteronormative lifestyle. Under the rule of queer matriarch Vanessa Bell, Charleston became a place that represented the progressive world that the Bloomsbury Group wanted and needed. As a response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Charleston Trust was forced to close their doors and cancel their largest event of the year, the Charleston Festival. Since Charleston receives no public funding, they rely entirely on tourism and visitors to stay up and running. Now that their source of income has been cut off, the Charleston Trust has cleverly turned to their digital patrons in order to survive. On March 26th, 2020, the Charleston Trust Twitter account officially made their “emergency appeal” public, graciously asking followers to donate whatever they could. This caused Charleston Farmhouse patrons and scholars, specifically those from the queer community, to come together through their shared love of Charleston in order to save this queer landmark. When I began my dissertation about Charleston Farmhouse, I never could have anticipated the Charleston funding crisis and this sudden revived public interest in saving this historic home. My presentation will address how queer physical space is translated into digital space. Using my readings of Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant’s domestic artwork, I aim to trace how the current Covid-19 experience is mirroring much of the events that led to Bell and Grant’s move to Charleston Farmhouse. I am also interested in discussing how the worldwide self-quarantine has inspired many to return to domestic arts to cope with current events, which reflects a lot of the commentary on Bell and Grant’s interior design work. The fear that Charleston Farmhouse may be lost reveals just how critical protecting historical queer spaces is and that the continued preservation of queer history at large may not be as stable as we previously thought.

Kelsey Carper is a PhD candidate in the English department at the University of Florida. She is currently working on her dissertation titled, “Queer Homemaking: Charleston Farmhouse Modernism.” Her research primarily focuses on exploring the intersections between queer domesticity and queer space, with an emphasis on visual culture and early 20th century British Modernism.

17.15: Comparative Analytic Aesthetics and Choice in Covid-19 Artworks

Christopher Hubbard (@chrs220)

This presentation will focus on artworks during the current pandemic and relate them not only to certain syntactic elements (and their relative complexities) of a few artworks from the Spanish Flu outbreak but also to Judith Butler's notion of choice, decision-making and responding to external societal factors. The lack of a choice hence figures into the syntactic elements and semantics of artwork surrounding Covid-19 not witnessed in the selection of works from the Spanish Flu outbreak: whereas the former depicts social, environmental, or economic struggles, the latter has a greater emphasis on the individual. This lack of choice or aporia, as depicted in the works from the current pandemic, due to external societal pressures (economy and policies, for instance), results in the continual collective processing of the pandemic itself in conjunction with the various societal pressures. This collective processing seems somewhat more emphasized in the artwork surrounding this pandemic because of the content of the pieces--the more "semantic representational" aspects that involve the cultural atmosphere in which they were constructed, phenomenology as illuminated by the pieces, and explicit and implicit depictions.

Christopher Hubbard has worked the past few years in social media and as a freelance writer, and recently acquired an MA in English. His academic interests include modernism, aesthetics, and power dynamics; some of his favorite writers include Kafka, Cather, Foucault, and Derrida.

17.30: Making Craft and War: COVID-19 and the War-Related, Craft Therapies of Americans since ca. 1914

Jennifer Way (@jenniferwayphd1)

University of North Texas

American media, major social institutions and states are characterizing covid-19 as a war. This characterization, combined with people making craft avocationally and vocationally as one response to the “conflict” links, based on situation and practice, the present day with a centuries-old history of deploying the activity of making craft as a mode of therapy aimed at fostering coping and healing in relation to war, including for war preparations, combat, and war’s aftermaths. In question, is what can we notice about the cultural and social meanings and significance of crafts that surface in times of conflict and what do we associate with them? Also, what is it about the importance of the practice of making craft that has remained constant, and what has changed as modes of war and therapy, (as well as ideas about what counts as coping and rehabilitation) transform? These questions offer a long, comparative historical view of culture and conflict on matters of making, technology, work, the body, subjectivity, and affect. Additionally, they point to the cultural and social use of craft blurring distinctions between home and war front, private and public, and the gendering of agency and the activities of tending, healing, and restoring.

Jennifer Way is a Professor of Art History at the University of North Texas (Dallas/Fort Worth), USA. This talk shares themes in her research for her current book project called *Deploying craft: crafting wellness and healing in contexts of war*. She recently published *The Politics of Vietnamese Craft: American Diplomacy and Domestication* with Bloomsbury Press.

17.45: Q&A

18.00 – 19.00 Panel 6: Teaching and Learning

18.00: Teaching Past Pandemics: the History of Disease and its Implications for Student Learning during the COVID-19 Outbreak

Caitlin Fendley (@CaitBFendley)

Purdue University

Teaching the history of disease and medicine in recent American history during an unprecedented healthcare crisis provides a unique opportunity to evaluate the ways in which past pandemics inform student understandings of the covid-19 outbreak, as well as how current circumstances shape their approach to and perspective on the history of disease. I seek to better understand student perceptions of disease outbreaks prior to and during a pandemic by comparing student reflections collected during a fall 2019 class and one that will take place this summer. I will trace how students incorporate personal experiences into their work and evaluate the extent to which their views on the current crisis inform their approaches to understanding and trusting historical information. Do their attitudes towards the media and public health experts, for example, shape views towards past historical sources, and if so, does this lead to a similar distrust of historical expertise or a more critical engagement with primary sources? Evaluating the extent to which students make connections between their personal experiences and those of historical actors will also help reinforce how cultural, historical, and social contexts impact disease and medicine (and vice versa) in significant ways.

Caitlin Fendley is a PhD Candidate in the Department of History at Purdue University, currently writing her dissertation on grassroots population activism in the twentieth-century United States. Her teaching and research interests include the history of medicine, science and technology, and the environment.

18.15: More and More Every Day: an Oral History Collection of Teaching and Learning in the COVID-19 Era

Summer Cherland (@SMCChistory)

South Mountain Community College

As the realities of the coronavirus outbreak became localized on our campus, a group of students and I launched More and More Every Day. A daily blog and interview series to capture and preserve the stories of teachers and students in the COVID-19 era. It was one of the first oral history archive collections in the US to do so. We thought that a collection of a few perspectives from students and faculty across campus would be interesting for us and cathartic for the writers and narrators. We were not expecting the outpouring of voices that came rolling in. As students across our campus – from varied majors and life experiences – published essays on our website, southphoenixoralhistory.com, faculty across the country called in with their own accounts of woe and celebration. We launched a podcast of the same name, publishing one lighthearted analysis and two interview episodes weekly. This oral history collection demonstrates that the shared experiences of teaching and learning during the COVID-19 era may bind our worldwide community together in unexpected ways. So often the challenges mentioned in interviews have little to do with pedagogy, content, or technology. The challenges we face are much more human.

Summer Cherland is faculty historian at South Mountain Community College, a 40-year-old urban campus home to 1st generation diverse and underserved students. She co-founded the South Phoenix Oral History Project and authored *No Prejudice Here: Racism, Resistance, and the Struggle for Equality in the American West, 1947-1994*.

18.30: Contagious Forgetting: Pandemic, Memory, and the Material Objects of COVID-19"

Graeme Calloway (@ChirpingGraeme)

Tufts University

"The Spanish Flu," argues Laura Spinney in *Pale Rider* (2017), "is remembered personally, not collectively." Indeed, few works of literature in the first half of the twentieth century explore the 1918 pandemic at all. The two-year span in which fifty million people succumbed to the flu figures as a memory-gap in our cultural record. Katherine Anne Porter's *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* (1939) is a rich exception to this literary poverty and remarkable in its attempt to represent the experience of falling victim to, and surviving, the disease. Using this text as a touchstone for exploring the difficulties of articulating and preserving both personal and collective narratives of pandemic, I turn to our current crisis to think about the ways this outbreak will be difficult to articulate and remember. In particular, I am concerned with the material objects of the mask and the ventilator, which together have become the ubiquitous face of COVID-19, even as they respectively anonymize and radically distort patient experiences via ICU delirium and trauma. There will be a future in which this pandemic belongs to the past, and these modern medical appendages will add new complexities to the already difficult task of collectively remembering this crisis.

Graeme Calloway received his B.A. with honors in English from Dartmouth College and is a PhD candidate in English at Tufts University. His dissertation research focuses on the literary phenomenon of the invasion novel and its influence on the modernist movement in twentieth-century British literature.

18.45: Q&A

19.00: End