

CALL FOR PAPERS  
Maxine Hong Kingston & the George Saunders Societies  
American Literature Association  
33rd Annual Conference  
May 26-29, 2022  
The Palmer House Hilton  
17 East Monroe Chicago, IL 60603

“Buddhism and American Writing.”

*There have been several recent studies* of literary writing as something that crosses between secular artistry and religious practice, for example Kyle Garton-Gundling’s *Enlightened Individualism: Buddhism and Hinduism in American Literature from the Beats to the Present* and Avram Alpert’s *A Partial Enlightenment: What Modern Literature and Buddhism Can Teach Us About Living Well Without Perfection*. The writers who are discussed in relation to Buddhism and other religions spreading from Asia to the West has increased since the Beats were the “usual suspects,” but it was surprising that Buddhism was rarely mentioned in the recent obituaries of bell hooks. What was the significance of Buddhism to hooks or to the highly influential queer/feminist writer Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick? Is the concept of *sunyata*, too often translated as “emptiness,” inherently progressive, at least in its Euro-American deployments? Let us ask such questions.

**Panel focus:** The Maxine Hong Kingston and George Saunders Societies will host panels on the topic of “Buddhism and American Writing.” In addition to Kingston and Saunders, other authors such as Gary Snyder, Ruth Ozeki, Anne Waldman, Norman Fischer, Philip Whalen, Michael McClure, Andrew Schelling, Keith Abbott, bell hooks, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Charles Johnson, Jack Kerouac, Joanne Kyger, Lou Reed, Robert Pirsig, Red Pine, Alice Walker, and Peter Matthiessen (to name a few) may be considered. Thematic treatments, discussions of literary innovation, the problematics of transpacific cultural exchange, juicy details about gurus, ecospirituality and new materialism, feminist visions and revisions—all this may be included.

**Please send proposals** of 200 or so words, your paper title, and a brief bio of 30-100 words to John Whalen-Bridge by 15 January, 2022. Thank you and Happy New Year.  
John Whalen-Bridge, National University of Singapore, [jwb@nus.edu.sg](mailto:jwb@nus.edu.sg)