

**DRAFT:** Please let Kirk and Patrick know at [kcurnutt@troy.edu](mailto:kcurnutt@troy.edu) or [pbonds@troy.edu](mailto:pbonds@troy.edu) of any necessary changes (or withdrawals) by October 15. Thank you!

# **Wildness and Wilderness**

A Symposium Sponsored by the American Literature  
Association

October 26-28, 2023

Drury Plaza Hotel in Santa Fe  
828 Paseo de Peralta  
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Conference Directors:  
Patrick Bonds and Kirk Curnutt,  
Troy University

Keynote Speaker: Hampton Sides,  
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## Acknowledgements:

The conference directors wish to thank all who organized sessions or proposed papers in support of this symposium on the American impulse to romanticize the untamed, the agrestal, and the feral—characteristics that make for great topics of intellectual inquiry but that are not particularly conducive to the smooth running of a colloquy like this. We thus want to express our appreciation for the support the ALA has offered in pulling this gathering together. First and foremost, we appreciate the sage advice and leadership of Alfred Bendixen, Founder and Executive Director of the ALA, who knows down to the nickel and the napkin the economics of conferencing, and Olivia Carr Edenfield, whose official title is ALA Director but whom we all know better as Mama Bear. We also appreciate the contributions of Maegan Bishop, our ALA executive assistant. Thanks go as well to ALA Executive Board Members who are in attendance: Deborah Clarke, Arizona State University; Jeanne Reesman, University of Texas at San Antonio; and Rene H. Treviño, California State University Long Beach. We would be remiss as well if we did not acknowledge the support of our respective partners, Shannon Berry Bonds and Tabitha Maples, whose counsel we never take for granted.

*The Drury Plaza Hotel, in which we have gathered to share our scholarly explorations of American literary history and culture, sits on unceded ancestral Tewa Land, specifically O'gha Po'oge, now present day Santa Fe. The descendants of O'gha Po'oge, the modern day Tewa people, still exist and live in Santa Fe and the local Pueblos of Nambe, Pojoaque, San Ildefonso, Ohkay Owingeh, Santa Clara and Tesuque. We pay our respect to the Indigenous caretakers of these lands and waters, those who came before and those who remain present today.*

**Thursday, October 26, 2023**

**Opening Reception and Kickoff Roundtable:  
Out of the Academic Wilderness and into the Experimental Wilds:  
Confronting Crises in Reading, Writing, and Research**

**5:30 – 7:00 pm (Palace B)**

Please join us for an official welcome, an opportunity to socialize, and a discussion of the challenges of invigorating our scholarly practices of reading, writing, and research in environments that not only seem increasingly hostile to intellectual activity but, perhaps more surreptitiously, regulate them through bureaucratic protocols, including everything from annual evaluations to funding resources to expectations to balance teaching and scholarly productivity.

How do we who value intellectual freedoms maintain an element of “wildness” in literary studies to resist normative tendencies? How do we enlarge our sense of literary histories, underappreciated genres, and forgotten authors amid increasingly strident political agendas dictating who and what should be studied and taught? How do we maintain a sense of our own individuality or aesthetics in our work while operating within professional standards of publishing? How do graduate students entering the field reconcile the personal pleasures of reading and literary appreciation with the rigor of critical objectivity? How do nontraditional scholars maintain a connection to their areas of interest without networks of support traditional academics sometimes take for granted? How can editors mentor aspiring readers and writers while also encouraging veteran academics to shake up their ingrained tendencies once in a while? How do we prevent American literary studies from drying up and reverting to barrens? And how do literary studies allow for the rights of groups to tell their stories in a "wild west" digital space of constantly shifting conspiracies and fake news?

We'll discuss all of these issues as a way of encouraging self-reflection and rekindling flustered ambitions in hopes that—with a little group therapy—we can reassure each other we're not lost in our own wilderness.

**Panelists:**

Sonia Calvo, National University

Kathryn C. Dolan, Missouri University of Science and Technology

Chris “CW” Johnson, University of Minnesota Duluth

Sara Kosiba, Northeast Ohio Medical University

Wendy Martin, Claremont Graduate University

Diane Smith, Independent Scholar

Moderator: Kirk Curnutt, Troy University

**Friday, October 27, 2023**

**Registration 8:00 - 10:0 am (Outside Palace A)**

**Session One: 8:30 – 9:45 am**

**1-A Modernist Wastelands and Wildernesses (Rivera A)**

Chair: Kirk Curnutt, Troy University

1. "Patterning Wildness in Steinbeck's *To a God Unknown*," Ryan Slesinger, Oklahoma State University
2. "Men and the Glandular Bulbous: William Faulkner and the Post-War Wild," Candace Waid, University of California, Santa Barbara
3. "Faulkner and Hemingway: Wilderness Domesticity," Deborah Clarke, Arizona State University
4. "Hemingway and the Sacred Space of the American West," Gail Sinclair, Rollins College

**1-B Poetry and Wilderness (Rivera B)**

Organized by the Society for the Study of American Poetry

Chair: Robert von Hallberg, Claremont McKenna College

1. "Wilderness as Practice in Contemporary Poetry," Charles Altieri, University of California, Berkeley
2. "Poetry and Bewilderment," Dustin Simpson, Reed College

**Session Two: 10:00 – 11:15 am**

**2-A Pastoralism and Ekphrasis (Rivera A)**

Chair: Gail Sinclair, Rollins College

1. "Testimonies of Trinity and the End of the Pastoral," Jennifer L. Jenkins, University of Arizona
2. "The Orgasmic Ekphrastic: Wild Queer Reading in Adrienne Rich's 'Rauschenberg's Bed,'" Michal Calo, University of Texas
3. "Wild in Three Keys: The Inevitability of the Wild and How to Attend to It in the

Poetry of Gary Snyder, Nelson Ball, and Elena Johnson,” Lance La Rocque and Lisa Narbeshuber, Acadia University

## **2-B F. Scott Fitzgerald in the Wilds (Rivera B)**

Chair: Sara Kosiba, Northeast Ohio Medical University

1. “‘Bernice Bobs Her Hair’: F. Scott Fitzgerald, Stereotype, Dakota Land,” Mary Jane LaVigne, F. Scott Fitzgerald Society
2. “*The Beautiful and Damned* and the Great Pandemic: Fitzgerald’s “Viral Modernism,” Meredith Goldsmith, Ursinus College
3. “The Role of Illustration in the Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald,” Tom Flynn, F. Scott Fitzgerald Society

### **Session Three: 11:30 – 12:45**

## **3-A Poetry and Apocalypse (Rivera A)**

Chair: Lin Atnip, St. John’s College

1. “Extreme Re-Wilding: Visions Of An Edenic Apocalypse?,” Susan J. Tyburski, Independent Scholar
2. “The ‘New’ Wilderness of Contemporary American Climate Fiction,” Kristin J. Jacobson, Stockton University
3. “Earth Kinship, Earth Grammar: A Primer on the Eco-poetics of David Hinton,” C. W. Johnson, University of Minnesota Duluth
4. “Interstitial Wildness: Mourning and Wonder in Contemporary Southern Nature Writing,” Anthony Dyer Hoefer, George Mason University

## **3-B Indigenous Gothic I (Rivera B)**

Organized by the Society for the Study of the American Gothic

Chair: Patrick Bonds, Troy University

1. “Old Deb and Claiming Groundlessness in Brown’s *Edgar Huntly* (1799),” Amanda Louise Johnson, Pitzer College
2. “Memories of the Mammoth: Rampage and Extinction in US Imperial Literature,” Jimmy L. Bryan, Jr., Lamar University
3. “Wild Rice and a Ghostly Future in Louise Erdrich’s *The Sentence*,” Kathryn Dolan, Missouri University of Science and Technology

### **12:45 - 2:30 pm Luncheon (Palace A)**

**Keynote: "When Is a Mushroom.... Non-Separation and the Practice of the Wild,"**  
**Lynda Zwinger, University of Arizona**  
**Introduction by Deborah Clarke, Arizona State University**

**Session Four: 2:30 – 3:45**

**4-A Contemporary Literature and Wildness (Rivera A)**

Chair: Wendy Martin, Claremont Graduate University

1. "Talking Animals' Wild City," Matt Morgenstern, Purdue University
2. "All Is Allowed Me Now": Narrative Bardos and Liberation from the Self in George Saunders's *Lincoln in the Bardo*," Holden d'Evegnée, Brigham Young University
3. "Witchcraft and Wild[er]ness in Toni Morrison's *Paradise* and *A Mercy*," Jessica Maucione, Gonzaga University
4. "Such Kindness: The Vision of Andre Dubus III," Olivia Carr Edenfield, Georgia Southern University

**4-B Roundtable: Rewilding the Humanities: Teaching Literature at St. John's and Deep Springs College" (Rivera B)**

Chair: Marsaura Shukla, St. John's College

1. Brighde Mullins, University of Southern California
2. David Neidorf, Deep Springs College
3. Katie Peterson, University of California at Davis
4. Sarah Stickney, St. John's College

**Session 5: 4:00 – 5:15**

**5-A Authorial Intersections: McCarthy, Ammons, Abbey**

Chair: Matt Morgenstern, Purdue University

1. "In the Wilds of a Post-Apocalypse: Exploring Silence and Challenging Binaries in Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*," Brittany Maloy, Brigham Young University
2. "The Way Inward: The Hero's Journey, Suffering and Enlightenment in Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*," Lawrence Kuhar, Wilkes University
3. "What I was doing seemed suddenly so incredibly ignorant": Barry Lopez Revisits an Arctic Dream," Ian MacRae, Wilfrid Laurier University
4. "The Planted and the Spontaneous," Eytan Pol, Texas Tech University

## **5-B Celebrating the Wilderness by Radicalizing the Wild**

Chair: Marie Mullins, Pepperdine University

1. "The Radical 'Nature' of Poetry," William Wenthe, Texas Tech University
2. "Is Wilderness Made, Discovered, or Experienced? The Idea of Wilderness in A.R. Ammons' Poetry," Aleksandra Hernandez, University of Miami
3. "Ekphrasis and the Wilderness of the American West," Zachary Ostraff, Texas Tech University
4. "Wild Knowledge: Flora, Fauna, and Epistemology in Mary Oliver's *What Do We Know*," Gerrit van Dyk, Brigham Young University

### **Session 6: 5:30 – 6:45**

## **6-A Regionalism and Reformation in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Literature (Rivera B)**

Chair: Meredith Goldsmith, Ursinus College

1. "Henry David Thoreau and the Wilderness Within: Moving from the Performative to the Reformatory," Tate Aldrich, University of Arkansas
2. "A West for Women; Or, A Frontier Feminotopia: Grace Greenwood's Travelogue in *The New York Times*, 1871-74," Paula K. Garrett, Warren Wilson College
3. "Tempests in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *The Pearl of Orr's Island*," Maire Mullins, University of Pepperdine
4. "Eyes Wide Open: Demythologizing the Lincoln Presidency in Leanne Howe's *Savage Conversations*," Angela Mullis, Rutgers University

## **6-B Wilderness and Wilderness in Cormac McCarthy (Rivera B)**

Chair: Cooper Casale, University of Colorado Boulder

1. "Cormac McCarthy's Vibrant Western Wilderness," Christy Call, Weber State University
2. "Diving Deep: McCarthy's Intertextual Salvaging of Faulkner and Hemingway in *The Passenger* and *Stella Maris*," Scott Yarbrough, Charleston Southern University
3. "The Wilds Beyond: Cormac McCarthy's Philosophy of Language and the Wilderness of the Real in *Blood Meridian*," Miguel A. Garcia, University of Texas at El Paso
4. "Why I Can't Teach Cormac's *Blood Meridian*," Patrick Bonds, Troy University

**Saturday, October 28, 2023**

**Registration 8:00 - 10:0 am (Outside Palace A)**

**Session 7: 8:30 – 9:45**

**7-A Midcentury Wilds (Rivera A)**

Chair: Kirk Curnutt, Troy University

1. "Rereading the Peacock: Domestication and Rewilding in O'Connor's 'The Displaced Person,'" Calvin Coon, University of Arizona
2. "Wildness of Formlessness and Form in the Poetry of Robert Lowell and James Wright," Kevin Barents, Boston University
3. "Louise Dickinson Rich and the Domestication of the Maine Wilderness," Lisa Botshon, University of Maine at Augusta
4. "Frankie Adams's Emotional Wilderness of Her Sexuality in *The Member of the Wedding*: Focusing on Musical References," Saori Iwatsuka, Nara Women's University

**7-B Indigenous Gothic II (Rivera B)**

Organized by the Society for the Study of the American Gothic

Chair: Amanda Louise Johnson, Pitzer College

1. "Zitkala-Ša's Gothic Wonderland," Alex M. Anderson, Purdue University
2. "The Undead Wabanaki and the Making and Unmaking of US Settler Literary Nationalism," Jared Hickman, Johns Hopkins University
3. "'Solastalgia' and the Frontier Gothic in Robert Montgomery Bird's *Nick of the Woods; or the Jibbenainosay*," Charles Bradshaw, Brigham Young University-Hawaii

**Session 8: 10:00 am – 11:15 am**

**8-A Rock 'n' Roll Wildness (Rivera A)**

Chair: Sonia Calvo, National University

1. "The Junk Virus: The Ecological Junk Aesthetics of William S. Burroughs and Brion Gysin's Cut-Ups," Carly Heidenfeld, University of New Mexico
2. "Hitching a Ride with the 1960s Wild Ones: Thompson and the Hell's Angels," Jacqueline Foertsch, University of North Texas
3. "'The Idiot Bastard Son': Frank Zappa, 'I Love You, Alice. B. Toklas!' and the

- Reified Hippie," Cooper Casale, University of Colorado Boulder
4. "The Leer-icism of the Asinine: The Battle Over Fictional Lyrics in Popular Music Narratives," Kirk Curnutt, Troy University

### **8-B Roundtable: "Wildness and Wilderness in the Long American 19th Century" (Rivera A)**

Chair: Alfred Bendixen, Princeton University

1. "Emily Dickinson's Wilderness and Wildness," Wendy Martin, Claremont Graduate University
2. "The Presence of the Panther in U.S. Frontier Literature," Rene H. Treviño, California State University, Long Beach
3. "Travels in the Wild," Susan Roberson, Texas A&M University, Kingsville
4. "Edith Wharton's Gothic Wilderness," Cindy Murillo, Colorado State University
5. "What's the Wild in Naturalism," Jeanne Reesman, University of Texas, San Antonio

### **Session 9: 11:30 am – 12:45 pm**

#### **9-A Wild Forms: Poetry (Rivera A)**

Organized by the Society for the Study of American Poetry

Chair: Robert von Hallberg, Claremont McKenna College

1. "H.D. and Emily Dickinson: A Wildness at the Margins," Susan McCabe, University of Southern California
2. "Expressive Individualism and the Rise of African American Poetry," Derik Smith, Claremont McKenna College
3. "Wilder Conceits: Toward a New (World) Metaphysical Lyric," C. D. Blanton, University of California Berkeley
4. "All this Wildness: A Response," Cal Bedient (University of California Los Angeles)

#### **9-B Experiencing Cormac McCarthy: A Memorial Roundtable (Rivera B)**

Chair: Patrick Bonds, Troy University

1. Dennis McCarthy, Santa Fe, New Mexico
2. Michael Crews, Regent University
3. Scott Yarbrough, Charleston Southern University, *Reading McCarthy* Podcast

4. Olivia Carr Edenfield, Georgia Southern University

**Lunch 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm**

**Session 10: 2:30 – 3:45 pm**

**10-A Modern Wilds II (Rivera A)**

Chair: Cindy Murillo, Colorado State University

1. "The Dynamo's Virgin," Ariel Silver, Southern Virginia University
2. "The 'Wildness' of Speculative Building in Robert Herrick's *The Common Lot*, Edith Wharton's *Sanctuary*, and Robert Grant's *Unleavened Bread*," Tara C. Foley, Baylor University
3. "Modernism and the Wild Sublime in the Western Writings of Harriet Monroe," Lin Atnip, St. John's College
4. "Poetry in Motion: Anglo-Irish Writers on the American Tour," Oliver Hennessy, Xavier University of Louisiana

**10-B Reimagining Wilderness, Reinventing Wildness (Rivera B)**

Chair: Jeanne Reesman, University of Texas at San Antonio

1. "New Materialist Onto-biography: A Critical-Creative Writing Practice for Unsettling Wildness in Precarious Landscapes," Laurie Ellen Gries, University of Colorado-Boulder
2. "Redefining 'Wildness' for Native Americans in *The Only Good Indians*," Manish Pandey, Texas Tech University
3. "Approaching the Santa Fe Trail as Indigenous Space," Robert Gunn, University of Texas at El Paso
4. "*Letters from Yellowstone* at 25: Wildness, Wilderness, and Science in the Nation's First National Park," Diane Smith, Independent Scholar

**Session 11: 4:00 – 5:15 pm**

**11-A Race and Gender in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Literature (Rivera A)**

Chair: Rene H. Treviño, California State University, Long Beach

1. "Woven Whiteness in Lucy Larcom's 'Weaving,'" Kristin Allukian, University of South Florida
2. "Leonard Black's 'Life and Suffering' Narrative: A Black Abolitionist Theodicy," Joe Lockard, Arizona State University
3. "James McHenry's *The Wilderness; or, Braddock's Times*: Historical Fiction

- as Performative Conflict," Joe Letter, University of Tampa
4. "Whitman's Way," Jason L. Williams, Tulsa, Oklahoma

### **11-B Nature and the Natural (Rivera B)**

Chair: Alfred Bendixen, Princeton University

1. "A King without a Crown: The Natural Man of Theodore Browne," Leslie Frost, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
2. "Done with the Compass / Done with the Chart!": Exploring Dickinson, Bishop, and Plath's Wildness," Brandy Barents, Boston University
3. "Robinson Jeffers' *Roan Stallion, Tamar, and Other Poems*: A Classic Work of Environmental Literature Turns 100," Ted Olson, East Tennessee State University
4. "Annie Dillard's Spiritual Vision of the Wild," Paul J. Contino, Pepperdine University

**Keynote Address and Reception (5:30 – 7:00 pm):  
An Evening with Hampton Sides  
(Palace A)**