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# American Literature and Therapeutic Cultures

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### Abstracts

**Timothy Aubry**

#### **Therapy in Public: Lionel Trilling and the Power of Neurosis**

When social critics lament the collapse of the public sphere, they often identify two culprits. One is therapeutic culture, which has, according to many accounts, replaced a concern for the collective good with an emphasis on the individual's psychic health. The second is identity politics, which has purportedly divided the world into incommensurate ethnic subcultures and obviated any possibility of articulating shared, communal ideals. Indeed, in the work of numerous theorists, the two, therapeutic culture and identity politics, go hand-in-hand. Both promote personalized affective solutions to structural problems. Neither allows for the possibility of true public engagement or political progress toward a better society for all.

My paper, "Neurotic Publics: Lionel Trilling's Ill Communication" will deploy Trilling's conceptualization of neurosis in order to complicate the binaries that underwrite the majority of these critiques. Neurosis, Trilling argued in his reading of Freud, is not a "wound," but an "activity"; it is the very means by which the ego seeks to manage the psychic forces that would destroy it. "We are ill," Trilling wryly observes, "in the service of health." Neurosis and the work it entails are not a barrier to social engagement; they are the very means by which individuals control and give meaningful shape to their interior psychic impulses so as to engage with a broader public—a task that artists are especially adept at performing. Moreover, in ascribing a positive social role to neurosis, Trilling valorizes a psychic condition that had been linked historically to his own ethnic subculture as a Jewish American intellectual and was enlisted in the failed attempt to terminate his employment at Columbia University. Significantly, Trilling's defense of neurosis designates an activity that transcends the boundary between therapy and socially engagement, between identity politics and participation in a deracinated public sphere.

*Timothy Aubry is professor of English at Baruch College, CUNY. He is author of *Guilty Aesthetic Pleasures* (Harvard University Press, 2018) and *Reading as Therapy: What Contemporary Fiction Does for Middle-Class Americans* (University of Iowa Press, 2011), and the co-editor of *Rethinking Therapeutic Culture* (University of Chicago Press, 2015). His essays and reviews have appeared in *The New Republic*, *The Point Magazine*, *The Chronicle Review*, *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Review of Books*, *Music & Literature*, *n+1*, *Best American Essays 2014*, *PMLA*, *Criticism*, *American Studies*, and other academic journals.*

## Isabelle Blondiaux

### Reading Practices and Therapeutic Culture

As underlined by the definition of “bibliotherapy”—“the use of reading materials for help in solving personal problems or for psychiatric therapy”—therapeutic reading practices include a protean and heterogeneous array of self-help and therapeutic practices which, for the most part, cannot be said to belong to the medical field and obscure their underlying ideologies. Questioning the uses of literature associated with contemporary methods of therapeutic reading leads to a challenging of their epistemological status and the way in which they align themselves with a “therapeutic discourse” that cannot be reduced either to an apparatus of curative and corrective strategies, or to a *Zeitgeist* (spirit of the times).

*Isabelle Blondiaux is a researcher associated with the LIPHA-PE [EA 4118] (Hannah Arendt – Paris Est Interdisciplinary Laboratory of Political Studies). She holds a PhD in practical philosophy and in French and comparative literatures, for which she is an accredited research supervisor. She is also a practising psychiatrist and psychoanalyst. Her notable publications include: Can Literature Heal? (La Littérature peut-elle soigner ? Honoré Champion, 2018); Psychiatry Against Psychoanalysis? Scandals and Controversies Around Psychotherapy (Psychiatrie contre psychanalyse ? Débats et scandales autour de la psychothérapie, Le Félin, 2009) and Céline: Portrait of the Artist as Psychiatrist (Céline : portrait de l'artiste en psychiatre, Société d'études céliniennes, 2004).*

## Beth Blum

### “Unlearning”: The Rise of an Aesthetic-Therapeutic Imperative

In the past decade, calls for “unlearning” have reached unprecedented prominence in both public and academic spheres. In the field of American self-help, “intentional unlearning” has become almost a subgenre unto itself with publications such as *Unlearn: Let Go of Past Success to Achieve* (2018); *Relational Reset: Unlearning the Habits that Hold You Back* (2019); *Unlearning the Ropes: The Benefits of Rethinking what School Teaches You* (2021), and too many others to list. The trend also informs American literary criticism. Jack Halberstam, in a 2012 MLA address, exhorts us to “unlearn the wisdom of the past and substitute wild forms of experimentation for domesticated tried-and-true traditions of thought.” Franco Moretti maintains that “unlearning” is what his Digital Humanities “distant reading” enables, while post-critique manifestos hinge on the trope of “unlearning” professional reading habits. This talk traces the discourse of unlearning—and its concomitant undermining of scholarly forms of education and attention—from Buddhist ideals of “deconditioning” that gained American traction in the 1960s, through to campus satires such as Zadie Smith’s 2005 *On Beauty*, and up to the contemporary phenomenon of YouTube reaction videos. I suggest that the concept’s contemporary vogueishness obfuscates the role that unlearning has always played in humanist methods and thought.

*Beth Blum teaches modern and contemporary literature at Harvard University, where she is the Harris K. Weston Associate Professor of the Humanities. Her book, *The Self-Help Compulsion: Searching for Advice in Modern Literature* was published in 2020 with Columbia University Press. She has published and forthcoming academic articles in PMLA, MLQ, Modernism/modernity, and American Literary History and is the British and Anglophone Book Reviews editor for the journal Comparative Literature.*

## **Juliette Bouanani**

### **Confessions, Shame and Bravery: the Feminine Lyric and Therapeutic Cultures**

In *The Given and the Made* Helen Vendler coins the expression of "Freudian lyric" to distance John Berryman's poems from the "confessional" label. Such distinctions reveal the entanglement of therapeutic cultures and the lyric in post-war American poetics, an era marked by the rising popularity of confessional poetry and an increasing interest for psychoanalysis. Lyric poems are no longer merely anthropomorphized, they are discussed through the lens of symptoms, sanity, and repression. In this literary context, lyric poems written by women are under new forms of scrutiny. On the one hand, the lyric's "healing" power becomes a common theme in feminist criticism: poems are a restorative space where the traumatic experience of the marginalized female subject can be exposed and sublimated. On the other hand, first person poems written by women are disproportionately reduced to their perceived psychological dimension, either as hallucinatory products of female insanity or as confessions rather than mediated and carefully constructed language. In both cases, the feminine lyric is seen and interpreted as inherently referential (if not entirely autobiographical), thus marginalizing more experimental texts written by women.

Furthermore, the new dialectic between the fetishization of experience and abjection of the expressive autobiographical lyric is expressed in gendered terms. This paper argues that the post-war discourse about the lyric is not only gendered but psychologically pathologized and saturated with affect. Words like "brave", "narcissistic", and more recently "shame" have become closely linked with the genre - coming from both its avant-garde detractors and its mainstream supporters. This paper aims at revealing that the intricate links between gender, post war therapeutic cultures and literary theory have profoundly impacted the theory and history of the lyric through polarized (lyric vs. anti-lyric) assumptions about the value of self-expression. This argument will be supported by a discussion of key theoretical concepts and texts, such as Rachel Blau DuPlessis's *The Pink Guitar*, Suzette Henke's "scriptotherapy", Gillian White's "lyric shame" and Rita Felski's reconsideration of confessional poetry.

*Juliette Bouanani is a PhD student under the direction of H  l  ne Aji and Nicholas Manning, at Paris Nanterre University. Her research focuses on the feminine lyric in contemporary American poetry in the works of four poets: Lyn Hejinian, Louise Gl  ck, Susan Howe and Sharon Olds.*

**Peter Boxall**

### **I Was the Prosthesis: Philip Roth and Therapeutic Fiction**

This paper reads the twenty-first-century novels of Philip Roth, from *The Plot Against America*, to *Exit Ghost*, to *The Humbling* and *Nemesis*, to ask how far Roth offers his own literary fiction as a therapeutic response to the failures of American power.

In all of these novels, Roth responds to the waning of various kinds of energy and force – the weakening of American hegemony, the experience of aging, the loss of artistic talent – by engaging in a particular kind of reality control. As these fictions depict worlds in which their narrators and protagonists are increasingly alienated and adrift, Roth’s narrative itself tests its own capacity to shift and reconstitute the realities that it represents and creates. The failing relationship between Nathan Zuckerman and Jamie Logan, in *Exit Ghost*, can only continue in the form of an imaginary dialogue; Simon Axler in *The Humbling*, suicidal as a result of his loss of talent as an actor, can only succeed in committing suicide by becoming one of the roles that he cannot longer perform.

This attention to fiction itself as the medium in which the weakening of reality is both registered and overcome reaches its most concise expression at the end of *The Plot Against America*. The novel closes as the protagonist – a child named Philip Roth – recognises that his own fictional being is all that he can employ to address the failure of American history to resemble itself; when he understands that ‘I was the prosthesis’. The novel reads this prosthetic urge in late Roth, to ask how far fiction can work as a therapeutic corrective to the tendency for contemporary reality to become... unreal.

*Peter Boxall is Professor of English at the University of Sussex. His most recent book, The Prosthetic Imagination: A History of the Novel as Artificial Life, came out with CUP in 2020. He has a volume of collected essays forthcoming with CUP entitled The Possibility of Literature, and is writing a book on the twentieth-century novel and the current crises in western culture, entitled Fictions of the West.*

**Yasna Bozhkova**

### **Psychotherapy and its Limits in Ben Lerner’s The Topeka School**

This paper examines how contemporary American author Ben Lerner engages with and ironically explores the limits of psychotherapeutic practices and institutions in his third novel, *The Topeka School* (2019). Belonging to the genre of autofiction, it centers on Adam Gordon, who also narrates Lerner’s first novel, *Leaving the Atocha Station* (2011). Both novels are Künstlerromane delving into the formative experiences that have shaped the author’s attitude to language. Yet although the first novel remains focused on the autodiegetic narrator’s point of view, *The Topeka School* experiments with multiple narrators and features long sections narrated by Adam’s parents Jane and Jonathan, both of whom are clinical psychologists working for “the Foundation,” an unnamed organization priding itself on its revolutionary methods that clearly draws on the Menninger Foundation in Topeka, Kansas. The novel foregrounds the frictions between, on the one hand, the Foundation as a locus of vanguard theories and therapeutic practices, and the other hand, the stifling atmosphere of the small-

town environment that surrounds it, with toxic masculinity, homophobia, and misogyny running rampant. The narrative connects the two worlds in complex ways, as for example through the inclusion of the point of view of Darren Eberheart, a classmate of Adam's who is struggling with school bullying and psychiatric illness, and is also undergoing treatment with his father. However, Lerner's satiric narrative also targets the stifling, toxic potential of the institution itself, by highlighting the problematic conflation of therapeutic and personal relationships, particularly the "practice of staff undergoing analysis with their senior colleagues, thereby assuring that boundaries were always blurred." The informal analysis Jane undergoes with a friend and colleague helps her recover the repressed trauma of childhood sexual abuse by her father, but this is then used against her by the estranged colleague who starts an affair with her husband. Lerner's satire also targets the ways in which the rarefied world of this vanguard institution is destabilized as it comes in contact with more mainstream approaches to psychology, by exploring how Jane, based on Lerner's mother Harriet Lerner, struggles to overcome her marginalization at the Foundation after writing a self-help bestseller. This paper analyzes how Lerner's ironic emphasis on failure—the common theme running through his three collections of poetry, his first two novels and the essay *The Hatred of Poetry*—unravels in this novel in relation to the paradigms of psychoanalysis and therapeutic listening.

*Yasna Bozhkova is a Lecturer in the English Department of Université Sorbonne Nouvelle, where she teaches literature, art and translation. She is a member of the research unit PRISMES (EA 4398). Her research focuses on transatlantic modernism, the avant-gardes, and contemporary poetry, and she is particularly interested in intercultural, intertextual and intermedial poetics. She is the author of *Between Worlds: Mina Loy's Aesthetic Itineraries* (Clemson UP / Liverpool UP, 2022) and the co-editor of *The Wanderings of Modernism: Errancy, Identity, and Aesthetics in Interwar Modernist Literature* (forthcoming with Clemson UP, 2024). Her articles have appeared in *Transatlantica*, *RFEA*, *Sillages critiques*, *Angles*, *Polysèmes*, *Miranda*, and *L'Atelier* among others. She is also the secretary of the *Société d'études modernistes* (SEM).*

## Jean-Christophe Cloutier

### The Therapeutics of Self-Translation: The Case of Jean-Louis "Jack" Kerouac

In a 1951 journal entry, at the age of 29, from his bed in the Bronx's VA hospital, Jack Kerouac confessed: "Il faut vivre en Anglais, c'est impossible vivre en Français. This is the secret thought of the Canuck in America. C'est important aux Anglais—it's important to the English... so the Canuck does it." With this pithy journal entry, Kerouac encapsulates both the damage of assimilation and what lies at the core of his melancholy: the impossibility of living in French in the United States. Born Jean-Louis K rouac to French Canadian immigrant parents, the man who would grow up to be known as the "King of the Beats" and often regarded as a 'quintessential American' was actually a native French speaker who, as his archive reveals, secretly composed multiple French or bilingual texts—only to later self-translate them into English before daring to show the manuscripts to publishers. My talk will address how formative Kerouac's French Canadianness and bilingualism really are to his breakthrough achievements as a new kind of American writer, and how self-translation became his chief

therapeutic means of negotiating his lifelong dualism and what he called “that horrible homelessness all French Canadians abroad in America have.” Indeed, Kerouac is an author who seems himself to be a “translation” as one of his manuscript signatures seems to imply: “Jean-Louis Kerouac, Translated from the French,” he wrote atop one of his attempts to translate his longest French novel, *Sur le chemin*. Restlessly moving from pride to shame, from French to English, Kerouac’s life on the run transmitted his heritage onto the page via a therapeutics of self-translation that sought to reconcile the impossibility of living in French.

*Jean-Christophe Cloutier originally hails from Beauport, Québec, and is associate professor of English and Comparative Literature at the University of Pennsylvania. He is the author of Shadow Archives: The Lifecycles of African American Literature (2019), which won the MLA’s Matei Calinescu Prize, the MSA’s First Book Prize, and the Waldo Gifford Leland Award from the Society of American Archivists. In 2017, he coedited, with Brent Hayes Edwards, Claude McKay’s Amiable with Big Teeth (Penguin Classics)—recently translated into French as Les Brebis Noires de Dieu (Nouvelles Éditions Place, 2021). Cloutier is also the editor of the original French writings of Jack Kerouac, La vie est d’hommage (Boréal, 2016)—rereleased on paperback in 2022—and has translated into English two of Kerouac’s French novels for the Library of America volume, The Unknown Kerouac: Rare, Unpublished & Newly Translated Writings. He is currently completing an extensive study of Kerouac’s oeuvre that explores the writer’s practices as a novelist, translator, and archivist.*

**Michaëla Cogan**

### **Mythopsychosis, or Catharsis Unbound in Jerome Charyn’s Autofictions**

Born in the Bronx in 1937 to Jewish immigrants, Jerome Charyn’s relation to American literature could be that of a standalone parasite, recklessly feeding on the larger bodies of canonic writers such as Faulkner while also flourishing on various autophagic processes of self-writing. His intertextual conversation with other literary sick, such as Melville’s *Bartleby* (of which Deleuze once described the “schizophrenic voca-tion: even in his catatonic or anorexic state, *Bartleby* is not the patient, but the doctor of a sick America, the Medicine-Man, the new Christ or the brother to us all”), makes his own autoreferential predilection for debilitated figures even more salient. The son of an idiotic immigrant ailing with imaginary ulcers, Charyn indeed presents himself as another such patient of the nation, born with an atavistic un-American-ness that is incurable, and manifests through clinical symptoms (nervous twitching, ringing in the ears, muteness). Drawing on Jacques Derrida’s views about the vitality residing in the contamination or infection of purity and sanity, this paper focuses on the curative purposes of Charyn’s autofictions—a series of cathartic narratives in which he reinvents the past to rid himself of its most toxic imprints—and on the nefarious effects these recreations may have on the writer. In Charyn’s own humorous words, there are times indeed when literature’s poisonous nature may outweigh its therapeutic qualities, for instance when pseudo-Freudian cases of compulsive fictionality are detected:

“Mythopsychosis, the terrifying need to mythologize one’s existence at the expense of other things. The sufferer of mythopsychosis seeks narratives everywhere, inside and outside of himself. [...] There is even a severer form of the disease, mytholepsy, in which the sufferer

cannot escape from his own dream. He falls into the text, lives there, and dies.” Fascinated with Proust, the asthmatic giant of anamnesis, Charyn in turn contracts his own (parodic?) meta-discourse on literature as a salutary malady.

*Michaëla Cogan is the author of “Portrait of the Artist as an Idiot. Idiocy in the Works of Jerome Charyn” (2020, unpublished PHD dissertation) and of « Portrait de mon père en idiot. Les écholalies littéraires de Jerome Charyn » (L’Atelier, Vol. 14, N° 1 : Le transfert, 2023). Her research currently addresses questions of humor and trauma. She teaches at the Université de Franche-Comté (Besançon, France).*

## **Thomas Constantinesco**

### **Blood Sugar: Food, Health, Race, and Literature in the Nineteenth-Century United States**

The pandemic of COVID-19 has tragically highlighted the role of comorbidities in the worsening of health conditions and the severity of a given illness. Among these, particularly in the United States, obesity and diabetes have been especially important, foregrounding in turn the overconsumption of fast-acting carbohydrates and its unequal consequences, notably along lines of race and class. This proposed paper reflects on the history of these entwined “epidemics,” as the Center for Disease Control and Prevention labels them, through a focus on the social life of sugar as it is represented in American literary texts, particularly at the turn of the twentieth century. It looks first at the way Henry James describes the “cult of candy” as a secular religion in *The American Scene* (1907), whereby he articulates his critique of the new immigrants’ practice of constantly “munching” candy and its dire effects on the constitution of the national body politic. It then connects James’s nativist and class-based politics of sugar to Sarah Orne Jewett’s fantasy of national incorporation through the consumption of cake in *The Country of the Pointed Firs* (1896) and to the ways in which her later story “The Foreigner” (1900) complicates it, when a foreigner from the West Indies metonymized as “sugar” arrives within, and threatens to disrupt, the New England coastal community of Dunnet Landing. Through the example of James and Jewett, then, the paper reflects on the relations between food, health, race, and literature in the United States.

*Thomas Constantinesco joined Sorbonne Université in 2021 as Professor of American Literature, after having taught at Université de Paris, Oxford, and Yale. He is also an honorary member of the Institut Universitaire de France and a former Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow. He is the author of *Ralph Waldo Emerson : l’Amérique à l’essai* (Editions Rue d’Ulm, 2012) and *Writing Pain in the Nineteenth-Century United States* (Oxford University Press, 2022), as well as essays and book chapters on nineteenth-century American Literature in such venues as *ESQ*, *American Literary History*, *American Periodicals*, *Textual Practice*, *Transatlantica*, *the French Review of American Studies*, and *the Cambridge Companion to American Literature and the Body*. He also translated works by Irving, Emerson, Melville, Twain, and James into French.*



## Adam Frank

### A Survey of Motives for Criticism

This paper initiates a project that explores the generative role that therapeutic discourse and techniques may play in literary criticism. In alignment with Foucault's understanding in his late lectures of therapeutics as a technology of self-care, and building on ideas presented in my first book (*Transferral Poetics, from Poe to Warhol* (2015)), the paper seeks to unfold "a poetics of scholarship" (as John Guillory puts it in his recent *Professing Criticism*) that neither denies nor apologizes for the fundamental subjectivity of literary criticism but rather theorizes it. Its points of reference, including Silvan Tomkins's affect theory and Keinian and post-Kleinian object relations theory, have led me to develop a set of countertransferral interpretive techniques oriented toward the salience of affect and phantasy in experiences of criticism. The paper exemplifies aspects of these techniques in readings of works by a handful of mid-century modernist writers whose work is at once affectively astute and materialist (Mary McCarthy, Nathalie Sarraute, possibly some late work by Gertrude Stein).

*Adam J. Frank is a professor in the Department of English Language and Literatures at the University of British Columbia. His research and teaching areas include nineteenth- and twentieth-century American literature and media, histories and theories of affect and feeling, and science and technology studies. He is the author of Transferral Poetics, from Poe to Warhol (Fordham University Press, 2015), co-author (with Elizabeth Wilson) of A Silvan Tomkins Handbook (University of Minnesota Press, 2020), and co-editor (with Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick) of Shame and Its Sisters: A Silvan Tomkins Reader (Duke University Press, 1995). He is currently completing a book manuscript based on the Radio Free Stein critical sound project.*

## Célia Galey

### What's Happening? Poetry Performance as Social Therapy

My talk will focus on experimental performance poetics that started to significantly expand in response to the conformism and thriving consumerism of post-World War II US society. Analyzing these performances as political and social therapy necessarily leads to try and qualify their impact on a larger scale, beyond the limited scope of experimental art. Have these heterotopic territories had a healing or preventive effect on creators and on the audience's need for entertainment and prestige? Because these collective practices offer an alternative poethical exploration of writing that strongly rejects the insulation inherent in the cliché of poetic writing as a self-centered therapeutical act, I shall study them as a literary response to what Josep Rafanelle I Orra has called "therapeutic capitalism".

*Célia Galey is Associate Professor of American literature at Université Gustave Eiffel, Paris. Her research focuses on US performance poetry and art from the mid-20th century. The former recipient of a Fulbright scholarship (Mandeville Special Collections at UC, San Diego and at UC, Berkeley, 2014-16), her PhD dissertation on the places and*

*non-places of Jackson Mac Low's performance scores will be published by the Presses du Réel in the coming year. Currently a student of traditional Chinese medicine at the Chuzhen Institute (Paris), she is planning to graduate in 2024.*

## **Martin Halliwell**

### **Embryonic Entanglements: Postgenomic Life Cultures in the United States**

It is no surprise that therapeutic discourses are especially fraught when it comes to pro-life and pro-choice arguments in the United States. Given that every US president since Ronald Reagan has tried to reverse the policies of the previous federal administration on embryonic rights, the language of reproductive freedom and fetal personhood has deep ideological implications, where questions of rights, access, justice, privacy, and biomedical practice pose searching questions of national, gender, sexual, and racial identities, as well as for mental health. As “one of the primary frontiers in contemporary American society”, this drama plays out on the national stage, such as Obama’s almost immediate reversal of Bush’s restrictions on reproductive rights; it has global ramifications when reproductive technologies go offshore into less regulated territories; and it raises entangled questions about the physical and psychological implications of therapeutic interventions into the reproductive cycle.

This paper wrestles the science of reproductive technologies away from the caricature that “surgical interventions, microscopic examinations, and lab cultures” transform “the creation of a baby into a matter of technology rather than nature”. In examining the long cultural reach of political, philosophical, scientific, clinical, and faith-based clashes on embryonics, the paper discusses two postgenomic literary texts. Daniel Suarez’s biopunk novel *Change Agent* (2017) explores how revived Cold War fears play out globally in the (de)regulation of reproductive technologies, while British crime writer Peter James’s *Perfect People* (2012) contrasts a US-based couple’s plans to purchase a designer baby with the messier sides of family relationships to test what “is humanly at stake at the intersection of biology and biography”, to adopt the words of conservative bioethicist Leon Kass. The paper traces a lineage between premillennial visions of reproductive technologies in the 1997 film *Gattaca* and these two more recent literary texts to think through the health and social implications of genetic replication within a therapeutic framework, raising fears about genetic disorders, health data, the welfare of babies and mothers, inequities of reproductive tourism, and what happens to filial relationships when technologies redefine the contours of life.

*Martin Halliwell is Professor of American Thought and Culture at the University of Leicester, UK. He is the author or editor of fifteen books, most recently *American Health Crisis: One Hundred Years of Panic, Planning, and Politics* (2021) and *The Edinburgh Companion to the Politics of American Health* (2022).*

## Therapeutic Generalization

In a recent meditation on why the left supposedly doesn't read literature, Natalie Quintane considers that the sort of fiction today that's most 'read and sold' is largely 'soothing' and 'consoling'. Thanks to such comforts, these 'domestic' novels are 'perfectly adapted to the latest form of capitalism'; indeed, not only that, but such works may represent 'one of its most accomplished creations'. By implication, countless readers—professional and nonprofessional alike—are avidly consuming capitalism's handiworks by virtue of their therapeutic affordances. And yet, Quintane's generalization of literary form's ameliorative effects—which of course is hardly unique, joining as it does a venerable critical tradition of diagnostic generalization reaching from Frederic Jameson's iconic prosecution of impressionism as a compensation for modernity's contradictions through to Leo Bersani's sweeping indictment of redemptive aesthetics—belies its own self-gratifications, epitomizing the consolations of critical superiority. Indicting the satisfactions of lisible fiction, the critic gains the satisfaction in turn of prosecuting late-capitalism itself, while reaffirming her heroism as the hyperalert commentator who offers to redress our susceptibility to literature's comforts by showing how symptomatically entangled they are in neoliberal logics of individualistic fulfilment and appeasement. Quintane reveals how rewarding it is for the critic to stand detached from such complicities, calling out our consolations as a way of calling for more 'symbolically and socially active' modes of writing, while solemnly making the case for modes of reading that might agitate us 'to the point of pushing us to act outside of books'.

So, what would such modes look like in practice? And do they produce the necessarily anti-therapeutic reading experience that commentators like Quintane clearly privilege in imaging socially engaged forms of writing and response? The implication is that nowadays we need fiction that can model detachment and disaffection by soliciting more disconsolatory ways of reading. But might the very advocacy of disconsolatory writing be in fact a therapeutic exercise for scholars themselves, allowing them to cultivate an affective disposition that's all the more politically virtuous for the way it advertises its own 'deliberated recoil', in Steve Connor's phrase, 'from the voluptuous temptations represented by texts'—temptations to which general readers are (allegedly) all too frequently prone? This paper turns to Raven Leilani's *Luster* (2020) and Valeria Luiselli's *Lost Children Archive* (2019) as novels that both invite and scrutinize this kind of critical gratification: though, diegetically, they are far from 'soothing', they nonetheless compel us to examine the varieties of savvy vigilance and ethically self-accrediting remove that have made the critique of literature's contamination by therapeutic culture such a source of contentment.

*David James is Professor of Modern and Contemporary Literature at the University of Birmingham, before which he was Reader in Modern and Contemporary Literature at Queen Mary, University of London. His recent books include Modernist Futures (Cambridge University Press, 2012) and Discrepant Solace: Contemporary Literature and the Work of Consolation (Oxford University Press, 2019). He has edited numerous books, including The Legacies of Modernism (Cambridge University Press, 2012), The Cambridge Companion to British Fiction since 1945 (Cambridge University Press, 2015), and, most recently, Modernism and Close Reading (Oxford University Press, 2020). For*

*Columbia University Press he co-edits the book series 'Literature Now', and is the Editor for British and world Anglophone writing at the journal Contemporary Literature. He is currently completing Sentimental Activism (forthcoming with Columbia University Press), a book about the politics of compassion and solicitation in pathography, poverty fiction, and refugee writing.*

## **Aubrey Jones**

### **Resistance, Transformation and Therapeutics: Representations and Treatments of Mental Illness in American Women's Writing Across the 20th Century**

The figure of the madwoman in fiction has long drawn the attention of American literary critics, as is perhaps most famously represented in Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's 1979 work *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*, which has now produced over 40 years of feminist criticism responding to and building off of the seminal work; many American, British, and French feminist thinkers have traced and curated the figure of the madwoman as representative of resistance to patriarchal power and language, positing her madness as the natural act of protest against a world created without her in mind. In more recent years, some have pointed out that this paradigm fails to undo the binary thinking inherent in the patriarchal order that they are supposed to be protesting, and further relegates women to the "irrational" side of the rational/irrational (sane/insane) binary. Marta Carminero-Santangelo puts pressure on the possibility of transforming (vs. simply resisting) gender ideologies, and asks: "Can the symbolic resolution of the madwoman in fictional texts contribute to such transformations in any way?". I would expand upon this question: would such a "resolution" require a therapeutic approach – that is, a curative approach eyeing her rehabilitation and possibly assimilation into neurotypical culture – or can the fictive madwoman yet play a role in transforming gender ideologies while remaining self-affirming in her non-neurotypicality?

This paper begins then with that question, with a mind to trace out the trajectory of the fictional madwoman in 20th century American texts and the ways in which her madness has been interpreted and might be interpreted beyond the scope of psychoanalytic readings, and particularly with an aim to consider alternative approaches to the multiple relationships between madness, psychotherapy, and the presumed (but contested) affirmation/resistance of the female subject in American women's writing. The representations of the disordered minds and bodies themselves will be touched upon, as well as the various ways that they are treated in various stories from the first half of the century via the works of Kate Chopin, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Sylvia Plath, passing through to an evaluation of the works of more recent writers such as Susanna Kaysen and Paula Bomer. Reflecting on such representations from the first half of the century versus the latter half will serve as the basis of an analysis of how psycho-therapeutic culture and the discourse of the fictional female subject have influenced each other over the past century within American fiction.

*Aubrey Jones is Associate Professor of French in the Department of World Languages at Weber State University in Utah, USA, where she teaches courses in translation, literature, and film. Her research focuses on the analysis of the relationship between feminine subjectivity and corporeality through textual representations, as well as on*

*pedagogies of translation. She is currently engaged in projects centered on the theory and practice of comic book translation, as well as the intersection of therapeutic cultures and literature.*

## **Michael Jonik**

### **"To restore your lost energy": Medical Science and Vitalism in Herman Melville's *The Confidence-Man***

This paper will explore how Herman Melville's 1857 novel *The Confidence-Man* relates to the development of nineteenth-century physiology, medical science and therapeutic practice. In particular, I will focus on the chapters dealing with the persona of the "Herb-Doctor" who, while he speaks as yet another among the polyphony of pantagrueist voices in the novel, nonetheless suggests a serious intervention by Melville in medical debates around physiology and vitalism in mid-nineteenth-century America. In chapter 16, for example, as the Herb-Doctor begins his campaign of convincing a "sick man" to purchase his "Omnibalsamic Reinvigorator," he laments that the so-called "mineral doctors" have "furthered untruth." He propounds a cure based in materia medica, putting him in proximity to developing mainstream botanically-derived medicines with institutional backing, but also on the fringes of major medicine (as either a charlatan promoting the benefits of false botanical concoctions, or one who draws on ethnobotanical medical knowledge and indigenous therapeutic practices). The Herb Doctor's risible skepticism parodies the limits of medical scientific discourse as it blurs with religion, philosophy, religion, magic, myth. He plays around the edges of the question of "what is life?," problematizing distinctions between inorganic, inanimate substances and the organic animate body: the very distinctions that govern the disciplinary differentiation of chemistry and physiology.

To explore this, I will situate selected passages of the novel in relation to contemporary understandings of medical physiology, vitalism and natural philosophy, especially in terms of German physiologists and philosophers (Blumenbach, Hegel, or Liebig) and American medical scientists (of key importance here is the contentious Charles Caldwell, an avid proponent of the "vital principle," and a vehement opponent of the place of inorganic chemistry in medical physiology). As I will seek to show, Melville's compressed evocation of the issue of vitalism in the Herb-Doctor episode might point to new medical-scientific contexts for understanding the novel. At the same time, the Herb Doctor might offer a brief but perhaps important instance of how Melville's thinks dialogically about ontologies of matter in relation to life and its organic corporeal, energetic, metabolic processes.

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### **“Art was Williams’s Therapy”: William Carlos Williams’s Maieutic Process**

“Art was Williams’s therapy” Webster Schott has affirmed. Indeed, if William Carlos Williams cured patients, the poet-physician also found personal relief in his poetic transpositions of medical appointments which were furthermore often written on prescription pads, as if poetry constituted a treatment per se. More specifically, Williams was an obstetrician who helped women deliver. This paper is thus aimed at creating a parallel between Williams’s practice of medicine and the philosophical concept of maieutics. In Greek mythology, Maia, whose name translates into “midwife,” was the goddess of nurture who inspired the maieutic process mentioned by Plato in his Symposium. In this text, Socrates explains that the midwife’s role is similar to the philosopher’s: they both help people deliver, whether it be physically or spiritually. The maieutic concept subsequently appeared as a grounding principle of psycho-analysis: the role of the psycho-analyst is to make patients symbolically deliver through language. Accordingly, Williams did not only help women give birth but worked as their confident thus precisely encouraging them to deliver through language. Nonetheless, in his poetry, the delivery process is not operated through but by language itself. In other words, the way language evolves in Williams’s poetry mirrors the four steps of childbirth – namely, fertilization, gestation, delivery and separation from the origin – that the doctor knew inside out. In this regard, Williams’s treatment of language can be analyzed in the light of Derrida’s interpretation of maieutic processes. The philosopher notably writes that the “penetrating” language of poetry is “self-orgasmic” and delivers the “indelible archive of this [coital] event,” namely “a child” or “a tattoo” as “blood and ink mingle” (Derrida). In other words, in Williams’s works, all seems as if language was another of the poet-doctor’s pregnant patients. In “The Red Wheelbarrow” for instance, the stage of fertilization is grammatically represented by the isolated preposition “upon” which couples or “magnetizes words” according to Royet-Journoud. Gestation is symbolized by the words qua words: each line supposes semantic expansion, as if language were a fetus in development. The colors and substances evoked in the poem (“red,” “white” and “glaze”) are colors commonly associated with childbirth. Finally, the poem having multiple possible interpretations, it illustrates the Derridean idea according to which language “does not belong” – language emancipates from its origin just as children eventually become autonomous and part from their mothers. Such examples will thus sustain this paper’s argument that Williams’s medical and therapeutic skills contribute to his poetic nurturing of language, revealing that if “art was Williams’s therapy,” it was also Williams’s pregnant patient.

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## Nicholas Manning

### Against a Diagnostic Criticism? On the “Pathologizing” of Fictional Characters

This paper will focus on the aesthetic and ethical implications of the application, increasingly common among literary critics, of pseudo-clinical psychological diagnoses to fictional characters. Arguing that the evolution of diagnostic protocols in modern psychology does not reflect their deployment as an interpretive strategy by literary critics, I will propose that the way many critics, and by extension readers, frame literary characters' psychological conditions tells us more about the specific vision of literature they are seeking to defend than it does about any particular pathology. The curious contemporary phenomenon of diagnosing literary characters with psychopathy, depression, schizophrenia or autism, becomes in this sense a surreptitious way of arguing for what literature should be: a moral and aesthetic vision, couched in the supposed terms of clinical method.

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## Béatrice Pire

### The Depiction of Psychotherapy in Jonathan Franzen's Crossroads (2021): the “Depressed” Wallace Effect

As early as 1996, in his essay published in Harpers' magazine and entitled "Perchance to Dream", Jonathan Franzen questioned the new function which he saw assigned to contemporary American fiction – a function since identified and commented on by Alexandre Gefen for French literature in *Réparer le monde* –: that of saving, caring, remedying, knitting together, suturing wounds and traumas, rebuilding the relationships and communities of the most fragile and vulnerable. He himself did not subscribe to this, arguing that the writer's task was to identify and represent the symptoms of a disease or illness holding the world in its grip ("Symptoms of disease" 47) rather than to heal and be a "Medicine for a Happier and Healthier world" (47). Rather than embracing a "depressive realism", he advised to side with a "tragic realism". On the other hand, David Foster Wallace always held writing to be saving and consoling: "language and linguistic intercourse is redeeming, remedy-ing", he said to Larry McCaffery. For him, a good writer is the one who "comfort[s] the disturbed and disturb[s] the comforted", an ideal that he put into fiction in one of his most famous short stories entitled "The Depressed Person", a form of self-portrait of the author as a patient as well as a therapist.

This paper proposes to study the impact of this short story, written as a clinical case and recounting a therapy, on the composition of a therapeutic session developed over sixty pages in Jonathan Franzen's latest book *Crossroads*, and to study, beyond the parodic response offered by the novel, what Marshall Boswell has called "the Wallace effect" on contemporary American fiction and the way writing processes the trauma left by the author's suicide in 2008.

*Béatrice Pire is Associate Professor of American Literature at University of Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris. She is the author of Hart Crane l'Ame extravagante (Belin 2003), Figures de la décomposition familiale dans le roman américain contemporain (Houidiard 2018), David Foster Wallace: Presences of the Other (ed. with P. L. Patoine, Sussex Academic Press, 2017) and Contemporary American Fiction in the Embrace of the Digital Age (ed. with P.L. Patoine and Arnaud Regnaud, Sussex Academic Press, 2021). She has published numerous articles, book chapters and book reviews on contemporary American fiction.*

## **Alwena Queillé**

### **"My Year of Rest and Relaxation": Vulnerability and Therapeutic Imaginations in the Contemporary Fiction of Ottessa Moshfegh**

Ottessa Moshfegh's fiction is symptomatic of an ambient boredom, a general anesthesia from which one struggles to wake up. Her novel *My Year of Rest and Relaxation* (2018) narrates a young woman's plan to sleep for a year in her New York apartment, with the help of an odd therapist, in order to "regenerate" herself, and foreshadows the situation of confinement and isolation we experienced during the recent pandemic. This novel crystallizes a satire of a therapeutic culture based on consumerism and the pharmaceutical industry, which affects the relationship to oneself and to others (Healy, 2004). Between sleep cure and emotional disorders, the drug-induced torpor in which the anonymous protagonist finds herself reflects the desire to reach emotional vacuity. Self-help books or the precepts of self-care have no power; on the contrary, unhealthy behaviors are a means to dwell upon an existence on the edge which tries to understand its own defect. Sleep turns into hibernation and becomes a confused universe, oscillating between mania and melancholy, oblivion and salvation. Life and creation come together in a symbiotic journey, constantly accompanied by an inner voice that makes one believe they are going crazy. What emerges is a vision of fiction that explores an aesthetic of negative emotions (Ngai, 2005) and in which it is necessary for the characters to be free to sink into darkness and vice in order to approach the gray areas of existence. This vulnerability of existence leads to the consideration (Pelluchon, 2018) of an emotional intimacy which emanates from the creative potential of a fiction of contemporary absurdity. Moshfegh seems, in this sense, to come close to Giorgio Agamben's (2008) definition of the contemporary, that is, an individual capable of detecting the beams of darkness coming from their own time. The so much hoped for awakening eventually occurs by the means of a capricious imagination, a subconscious movement which animates the lonely and solitary individual. Literary creation appears as a healing art that, paradoxically, does not provide any remedy. Could a creative representation of vulnerability in the light of therapeutic cultures allow us to find a way out of an existential *huis-clos*?



*Alwena Queillé is a PhD candidate in contemporary American literature at Sorbonne Nouvelle University (supervised by Béatrice Pire). Her master's thesis focused on the exploration of solitude and isolation in Ottessa Moshfegh's work, and her current dissertation examines the representation of vulnerable intimacies in the contemporary American fictions of Ottessa Moshfegh, Rachel Kushner, and Emma Cline, particularly in light of theories of vulnerability and affect.*

**Victoria Robert**

### **Self-Help, New Religions, Cults: Therapeutic Cultures of Influence in Coming-of-Age novels by Emma Cline, Jeffrey Eugenides, R.O Kwon and Alison Wisdom**

In her article “Why Are so Many Fictional Teens Entering Cults?” Katherine Cusumano points out that in pop culture and in American literature in particular teenagers are searching for an escape from traditional patterns, especially concerning religion. In this quest for another way of life, away from systemic patriarchal paradigms, the narrators—all young women—are drawn to the reappropriation of their spiritual journey by focusing on themselves. All the books at stake here are heirs of the 2000s era of self-help books where one's only guide is oneself. In fact, the novels are full of tropes of self-help realization such as: “find my inner self”, “find my true self”, “fulfil my purpose”, “connect with the universe”. Adding to this language of spiritual quest, the pronoun “I” is ever-present, focalizing the diegesis through a phenomenological lens. Yet, this appeal for a spirituality or a new religion of the “I” can lead to the repetition of patterns of influence such as joining a cult-like group. These groups create a mix of existing religious approaches to break free (on paper) from established religions. For instance, the guru in *We Can Only Save Ourselves* (Wisdom, 2021) buys a priest robe at Goodwill in order to recreate confessions as performed in Christianity. Another example could be seen in the leader in *The Girls* (Cline, 2017) using LSD as the wafer for Mass.

It is important to shed light on the specific context for this spiritual quest. All the books in question are set in California or in progressive colleges on the East Coast during either the 1970s or 2000s (both periods of turmoil in American history, and as author R.O Kwon puts it: “in times of unrest, absolute answers become particularly appealing”). These two geographical spaces are known for being more liberal minded, where the culture of the self is more central. In *The Lightness* (Temple, 2020), the cult rather resembles a rehab or meditation center for people in need of disconnection from a world that to them seems wrong. Moreover, all the protagonists are WASP, also emphasizing the dimension of racial privilege in both self-help and spiritual quests.

Instead of creating a space for emancipation, the use of coming-of-age novels to portray this search for a fuller existence leads to a spiritual vertigo. After having hoped to be freed from a faith that was perpetuating gender inequalities, the narrators fall into groups in which, without the crisp contours of faith, violence and illusions are what fill their spiritual journey. Literature thus becomes a means not to realize oneself but to experience one's own exclusion: an experience felt both by characters and readers.

*Victoria Robert is a PhD candidate under the supervision of Nicholas Manning (Université Grenoble Alpes) and Nathalie Caron (Sorbonne Université). Her thesis tackles the spiritual quest in coming of age stories by contemporary American women authors in specific contexts of influence in cult-like environments.*

**Jean-Paul Rocchi**

### **“Save My Mind – and Yours”: Pathogenic Culture and Psychoanalysis in Colson Whitehead's *The Nickel Boys* (2019) and African-American Literature**

In the sixth chapter of Colson Whitehead's novel *The Nickel Boys* (2019) the main protagonist Elwood watches – or imagines from their screams – his fellow inmates being beaten while waiting for his turn. The African-American teenager is thus made to occupy the positions of both witness and agent in a fantasy of disciplinary violence and masochistic sadism turned into reality. The scene bears some resemblance to the three-parts structure of “A Child Is Being Beaten” (1919) where Freud, while elaborating on his patients' fantasies, argues that, as a result of guilt, masochism is reinvested and transformed into sadism. But Whitehead's chapter unfolds a different reading which demonstrates that psychoanalysis can be universal in as much as it adapts itself to cultural specificities. What Whitehead's text shows is that the eroticization of the death drive is being spatialized through the racial rapport, paving thus the way for the hypothesis that sadistic and sexualized violence creates the race it needs for its being deployed. A racialization reinforced throughout the novel by a series of hierarchized dualities ensuring the stability of an otherwise psychotic order. Not only does *The Nickel Boys* illustrate the prevalence of perversion and eroticized hatred (Stoller, *Perversion: The Erotic Form of Hatred*, 1975) over the law, showing how systemic and institutionalized racism channel unmastered death drives, but the novel also unveils that this state of social psychosis masquerades itself as the “right order” (Lacan, *Écrits 2*, 1966). To do so the text guides the reader so that (s)he can differentiate one order from the other. Contrarily to Freud, the primary material is not of fantasmatic nature. It resorts to an actual historical reality, a pathogenic culture fictionalized. Its purpose is to understand how a collective psychotic fantasy has imposed itself as the sole reality, a normality merging genital force to political power (Rosenberg, *Masochisme mortifère et masochisme gardien de la vie*, 1991). While exploring the black text's potentialities for psychoanalytical “pre-theorization” (Pierre Bayard), of which Whitehead, after Baldwin, Morrison or Dixon, is exemplary this paper also intends to interrogate, in the American contemporary academic arena, the split between materialistic approaches of race and its being derealized to the point of non-entity in certain psychoanalysis-oriented theorizations – the ultimate final cure.

*Professor at the Université Gustave Eiffel in Paris, Jean-Paul Rocchi teaches in American studies and African American literature and gay, lesbian, and queer studies. A Fellow of the Du Bois Institute (Harvard, Fall 2007), he has been the Deputy Director of the Graduate School “Cultures et Sociétés” (Université Paris-Est, 2014-20). He has published several essays on James Baldwin and other contemporary black writers, and on race, sexualities, psychoanalysis, and epistemology. He is the author of several edited collections including *L'objet identité: épistémologie et transversalité* (2006), *Dissidence et identités plurielles* (2008), and *L'art de la discipline: disciples*,*

*disciplinarité et transdisciplinarité* (2016) published in the e-journal *Quaderna* (<http://quaderna.org/3/>). He was in 2011 the main organizer of the CAAR Conference “Black States of Desire: Dispossession, Circulation, Transformation” (<http://caar2011.caar-web.org>) from which he has co-edited three collections: *Understanding Blackness Through Performance—Contemporary Arts and the Representation of Identity* (Palgrave-Macmillan, 2013); *Black Intersectionalities—A Critique for the 21st Century* (Liverpool University Press, 2014); *Black Europe: Subjects, Struggles, and Shifting Perceptions* (Palimpsest, A Journal on Women, Gender, and the Black International, SUNY Press, 2015). In 2016, Jean-Paul Rocchi published the monograph *Ce qui compte*, a personal introspection and a study on art, love, and identity, in the issue *On Contemplation* edited by Myron Beasley for *Liminalities, A Journal of Performance Studies* (<http://liminalities.net/12-2/cequicompte.html>). His anthology of critical essays *The Desiring Modes of Being Black—Literature & Critical Theory* was published with Rowman & Littlefield International in 2018. Jean-Paul Rocchi has been a research fellow at the CNRS (the French Center for Scientific Research) between 2019 and 2021 and is currently working on two monographs: the first one dedicated to Colson Whitehead's political ethics and the second in critical race theory, psychoanalysis, and literature on affects and identity tentatively entitled *Affectivity in Black: Text, Feeling, and the Transference of Power*.

## Trysh Travis

### Behavioral Health and the Narrative Arts

This paper departs from the presumption that the sociocultural formations put in place by psychoanalysis and its characteristic “talking cure” have been replaced by those associated with cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and its associated “manualized therapies.” Since their introduction in the early 1970s, the latter have come to occupy a hegemonic position in the landscape of American psychology, both reflecting and enabling the field’s turn away from “mental” and towards “behavioral” health. This turn—which ramifies at the level of popular culture as well as of professional practice—was obviously precipitated by a host of economic, intellectual, and political forces as well as by new clinical concepts, settings, and practices. Arguing against cultural studies’ will to focus on the macro-level trends, I posit that scholars of the literary might usefully attend to the more human-scale agents of change: the turn from a clinical encounter grounded in some version of the “talking cure” to one organized by the workbook-and-quiz structure typical of manualized therapies. What, I ask, are the implications of this shift for literary study, given the field’s deep and abiding relationship to psychoanalytically informed/aligned ideas about narrative, interpretation, and subjectivity?

Drawing on analytical frameworks from print culture studies and the emerging field of technical communications, I argue that the mundanity of manualized therapy—whose deprofessionalized practitioners typically serve clients from marginalized populations in decidedly unglamorous settings—has prevented literary scholars from taking it up as a serious object for analysis. I wonder if this can change? Is it possible, I ask, for literary scholars to use behavioral health’s assumptions about subjectivity, narrative, authorship, and readership in the way an earlier generation of critics used the assumptions of psychoanalysis? If not, why

not? And if so, what are the costs and benefits to literary study of taking the therapeutics of behavioral health as seriously as we once took those of its predecessor?

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## **Julie Vatain**

### **From Catharsis to Resilience? Contemporary Reconfigurations in American Theater**

The interplay of theater and therapy in the United States is as old as the ascension of psychological realism, and runs as deep as the emotional intensity of Method acting. As an embodied and collective art with Ancient roots and elastic boundaries, theater is susceptible to being associated with (or mistaken for) therapeutic processes by a remarkable number of participants: not only the author and reader, but also the performers and creators who bring the play to life, and all the spectators who share in the communal experience of the show. Where does social (or even democratic) ritual end, and where does personal healing begin? While the tendency to align playwriting and performance with various experiments in psychotherapy has been spoofed by authors and directors from the dawn of Freudianism, the contemporary stage illustrates renewed inclinations to explore the threshold spaces between artistic and curative practices, as it seeks to reinvest in the value of live, shared, theatrical presence in a hyper-connected world. This paper proposes the concept of resilience, a contemporary "keyword" (Bracke) or "toolbox" (Tisseron), as an operable frame to analyze some of the obsessive therapeutic themes portrayed by 21st-century stages, and to probe the formal and metatheatrical reconfigurations they entail. It will focus on two plays from the past decade: Lindsey Ferrentino's *Ugly Lies the Bone* (2016), where a female veteran wounded in Afghanistan attempts to heal through VR therapy, and Aleshea Harris's *What to Send Up When it Goes Down* (2017), a play offered as a healing ritual for black audiences in the context of racist violence. Taken together, these very different works allow for a nuanced investigation into the ways resilience—a concept derived from physics through psychology—shapes current approaches to performance and spectatorship, replacing classical categories with more elastic forms of ritual.

*Julie Vatain-Corfdir is associate professor at Sorbonne Université. Her research centers on the dramatic text – on the page, on stage, and in translation. She is the author of Traduire la lettre vive (Peter Lang, 2012, recipient of the SAES/AFEA book of the year award) and has edited several collections of essays and conversations with artists, including American Dramaturgies for the 21st Century (SUP, 2021), American Musicals: Stage and Screen / La scène et l'écran with Anne Martina (SUP, 2019) and La Scène en version originale (SUP, 2015). She has published articles and book chapters on many*

*anglophone playwrights, as well as translations (contemporary plays, short stories, novel, films). Her current research project investigates the writing of resilience in contemporary American theatre, in particular in plays written – or performances devised by – women. She is also a professionally-trained actress and director.*