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**“A Jury ye young fools is nothing. What's to be done with Public Opinion!”:  
True Crime, Individual Responsibility, and Two Averys on Trial**

Kassie Jo Baron

**Abstract:** Articles from *BBC*, *Times*, and *Rolling Stone* have commented on the recent rise of the true crime genre in the United States; however, interest in crime and criminality is anything but new. Nineteenth-century public interest in crime drove the press, leading to an explosion of printed material. Textile operative Sarah Maria Cornell's 1832 murder by Methodist minister Ephraim K. Avery was a media sensation that brought together readers in industrial New England and led to journalistic investigations, broadsides, lithographs, a touring show of wax figures, and a threat on P. T. Barnum's life. Those following the case became invested in understanding the lives and motivations of both victim and perpetrator, as the genre's subjective interpretation of objective facts was used to influence consumers' responses. Today, the fascination with the murder of young white women is reproduced in the United States by binge consumption of both serialized and episodic investigations in podcasts and mini-series. The investigation and trial of Steven Avery for the 2005 murder of Teresa Halbach drew international interest after the release of Netflix's *Making a Murderer* in 2015. The popularity of true crime relies on a perennial fascination with violence, a desire to avoid a similar fate, and the sense of community created between fellow consumers. Connecting coverage of the nineteenth-century Ephraim K. Avery with that of today's Steven Avery reveals that true crime media's obsessive focus on white female victims perpetuates an emphasis on personal responsibility that hides systemic violence.

**Keywords:** classism, individualism, media, True Crime, white supremacy, women and gender studies

**The Ends of Imagination: Trauma Narrative in Arundhati Roy's Prose and Politics**

Jamie Chen

**Abstract:** Arundhati Roy became an overnight literary sensation in 1997: *The God of Small Things* was published to great acclaim from the critics, with Roy receiving a million-dollar advance and publishing houses snapping up the rights in more than eighteen countries within months of the

novel's completion. Roy had spent four years working on the manuscript and would take another two decades to write her second novel, *The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*. In the meantime she published more than a dozen nonfiction books, whose topics ranged from critiques of nuclear armament to dam development. This article applies a postcolonial lens to the changes that Roy's prose seeks to achieve, focusing particularly on how her fictional and nonfictional work pushes the ends of her writerly imagination to work through personal and collective trauma. I use the term "work through" as LaCapra defines it in *Writing History, Writing Trauma*: "one is able to distinguish between past and present and to recognize something as having happened to one . . . which is related to, but not identical with, here and now" (66). LaCapra's emphasis on distinguishing between the past and present is linked to recognizing change or growth in this analysis, relating back to Roy's work both in terms of its activist applications as well as its experimentations with formal repetition. The article compares stylistic techniques in her nonfiction and fiction, specifically the printer's marks in *The Greater Common Good* and *The God of Small Things*, and analyzes how they are functioning differently in a trauma narrative. The article's title is a reference to Roy's first political essay, "The End of Imagination," and the analysis looks at the two interpretations of "ends," both in terms of limitations in her works as well as the conclusion she seeks to achieve through them, positing that Roy's multiple forms of storytelling indicate an imagination that is endless.

**Keywords:** South Asian literature, the novel, narrative studies, book studies, social activism

## Ralph Ellison's Acoustic Stereoscope: Reading *Invisible Man* through Günther Anders's Phenomenology of Music

Paul Devlin

**Abstract:** This article is a reading of Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952) in light of Günther Anders's phenomenology of listening (1931) and hypothesized acoustic stereoscope (1949), proposing the latter as a source for the narrator's speculative desire to hear five recordings of Louis Armstrong's "(What Did I Do to Be So) Black and Blue" playing simultaneously. Anders's obscure theories and notions about listening offer a way to conceptualize some of the novel's most enigmatic moments, including its descriptions of echo and its notoriously ambiguous final sentence. The article also explores Anders's career, possible social connections to Ellison, as well as Ellison's renewed interest in music in the late 1940s after years of ambivalence following his decision to stop pursuing music as a career. This recovered interest included working for inventor and sound engineer David Sarsar. This part-time employment intersects with the philosophical questions and aural metaphors under investigation here, pointing to a different intellectual context for the novel's prologue and epilogue (1951) than for parts of the novel composed in the 1945–48 period.

**Keywords:** African American Lit, listening, modernism, music, sound studies

## The City-Sin: Collective Responsibility for the Plague in Early Modern London

Andrew Fleck

**Abstract:** The epidemic of bubonic plague that struck London in 1603 created its own culture of collectivity. Instead of seeking to place blame on others, the writers responding to the epidemic understood the disease to be divine punishment and a call to collective moral reform. Analyzing the plague pamphlets of Thomas Dekker, William Muggins, Thomas Middleton, and a Dutch refugee residing in London, Jacob Cool, this article argues that the focus on personal moral responsibility for the plague and the need for collective reform created an unexpected culture of collectivity in early modern London.

**Keywords:** belief systems, collective memory, early modern, identity formation, poetry, prose

## Fluid Faiths: Reading Religion Relationally in Asian American Literature

Jack O'Briant

**Abstract:** While the designation of Asian American literature as a field dates back to as recently as the 1970s, it is nevertheless surprising that, to my knowledge, there is not a single scholarly monograph on the topic of religion in Asian American literature. However, in religious studies and the social sciences, there is a growing body of scholarship examining the role of religion in Asian American communities, and particularly, but not exclusively, the prominence of various expressions of Christianity therein. Despite this prominence, criticism within the field of Asian American literature has largely interpreted the presence of Christianity primarily in terms of its associations with oppressive colonial regimes. This article demonstrates the value of supplementing such readings with greater attentiveness to the specific religious histories underlying Asian American literature in order to better account for the ambivalence—rather than outright antagonism—toward Christianity that seems characteristic of many Asian American literary texts. Such an approach implies, just as national and racial identities are historically complex and often contested categories, that religion's cultural fluidity makes it an equally rich site for understanding literary expressions of the painful loss and transformation as well as the unexpected richness and beauty manifested within the conditions and consequences of global migration. Drawing on Shu-mei Shih's notion of relational comparison, the article turns to scholarship on the history of Christianity in both Korea and Vietnam to demonstrate how these histories inform and aid in interpreting the ambivalences of Christianity's presence in the novels *Dictée* by Theresa Hak Kyung and *The Gangster We Are All Looking For* by lê thi diem thúy.

**Keywords:** Asian American Literature, colonialism, identity formation, migrant writers, religious studies

## **An Immigrant as a Blogger in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah***

Mariya Shymchyshyn

**Abstract:** The preliminary part of this article outlines the changes that immigrants face in today's era of global mobility and how these changes correlate with the aesthetics of migratory fiction. Then I discuss the identity of a Nigerian immigrant, Ifemelu, in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* and the reasons that led to her dissatisfaction with identitarian politics in the United States and prompted her to start a blog about racism. The article concentrates on the monetization of race through Ifemelu's blog posts and the movement from politicizing race to its capitalization. I assess the grounds for her shift from political blogging in the United States to writing a historical and cultural blog after returning to Nigeria. Her blogging in America became a way of capitalizing on race while in Nigeria, suggesting that cultural and historical blogging is a way to build a new, collective, decolonized identity. Decolonization as an act of refusal must be turned into the act of assertion, an act of refoundation.

**Keywords:** Black immigrant experience, capital accumulation, capitalism, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, colonial studies, communities of color, decolonization, displacement, fiction, globalization, identity formation, literary criticism, migrant writers, race studies