

Representations, Legacies, Consequences, and Global Impacts

Book of Abstracts

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American Pastorals: Philip Roth's Representations of War

Considered a 'towering figure' of American literature, Philip Roth's novels poignantly delve into issues of identity—particularly the Jewish-American experience—, sexuality, and the overall confrontation between reality and idealization, calling into question the myth of the American dream. His works rely extensively on specific historical contexts, serving as significant tools for the demystification of American visions of freedom, and, on the whole, for a reconsideration of America as an idyllic pastoral locus.

Although Roth never actively participated in military conflicts, war often appears in his narratives as a haunting motif and backdrop, almost always invading protagonists' lives. Scholarly research has interpreted Roth's works from a variety of perspectives, though, fairly recently, war has turned into an additional and relevant aspect to focus on, opening paths for fresh interpretations of Roth's oeuvre. James Bloom's *Roth's Wars: A Career in Conflict* (2022) is the first volume

that pays attention to Roth's relationship to and representations of war. Bloom claims that, in order to fully understand Roth's novels, war and its various depictions—"wars abroad and wars at home, wars declared and undeclared, wars in America's streets, families, arenas, and literary saloons, imagined wars and metaphoric wars" (Bloom xi) — need to be taken into consideration. Furthermore, novels such as *American Pastoral* (1997) and *The Human Stain* (2000) have been published in concomitance with the developing field of trauma studies, this pointing to a possible interest by the author in exploring direct and indirect traumatic impacts of American conflicts upon individuals' lives.

This proposal aims at considering Roth's representations of war, and trauma, focusing on how American foreign policies contributed to the destruction of American dreams, affecting the personal histories of the characters, this leading to an overall reconsideration of American ideals. This paper will mainly take into account Roth's

American Trilogy, which comprises (2000), while also referring to other novels *American Pastoral* (1997), *I Married a* when considered adequate. *Communist* (1998), and *The Human Stain*

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Ana Brígida Paiva (NOVA FCSH / CETAPS)

Afterimages of Conflict: War, Visuality, and the Poetics of Ocean Vuong

This conference paper explores the intersection of war photography and poetry in the work of Ocean Vuong, a Vietnamese American poet whose writing reflects both a “photographic eye” and the intergenerational reverberations of the Vietnam War. Drawing on Vuong’s engagement with the second-generation Vietnamese-American experience and the inherited post-memories of war (as conceptualized by Marianne Hirsch), this paper examines how his poetry translates the visual registers of conflict into

fragmented, image-rich language that conveys the unspeakability of trauma, following frameworks developed by trauma theorists such as Cathy Caruth, Isabelle Wallace, and Eric Rosenberg.

Vuong’s collections *Night Sky With Exit Wounds* (2016) and *Time is a Mother* (2022) highlight the visual and sensory dimensions of memory and the violence of war, not only through the recurring presence of photographic imagery within the poems but also in the design of his book covers. By engaging with the

aesthetics of war photography, Vuong's poetry demonstrates how trauma resists linear narration, surfacing instead through images, silences, and hesitations. This paper argues that Vuong's work occupies a crucial place in American war literature,

showing how poetry, like photography, can register the haunting afterimages of conflict while negotiating the precarious task of representing inherited histories of violence.

Keywords: Vietnam War; Trauma and Postmemory; War Poetry; Visuality; Literary Trauma Studies.

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Trauma during the Vietnam War in Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*

Trauma and nefarious psychological effects happen during and after the triggering of impacting events that somehow linger in our subconscious. Such is the case of PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) and its aftermath, experienced by countless soldiers throughout History – an incapable way of bidding a last farewell to past war endeavours.

In *Apocalypse Now*, we are shown and given a narrative that showcases these disorders, among other equally important

themes. Maintaining a strong influence from *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad, one of the most studied novels in English Literature, we dive into the point of view of Captain Willard, in an assassination mission paralleled as a journey to mental instability through the experience in the Vietnamese jungle.

This paper aims to ponder the maddening aspects of the aforementioned movie, in an attempt to also depict showing and explaining the futility, terror and horror

inherent to war in general; arguing that evidently North-America has abused the Vietnamese soldiers with a brutality without question and fixed objective whatsoever, just to further impose its supremacy—as if it wasn't already cemented in the repercussions of the Second World War.

Beyond the theme of trauma, the seemingly mindless attitude of dispatching an already traumatized captain to an assassination mission, as if he was just an ordered hitman, will also be analysed

through the lenses of profit and duty, against the humane side of caring about the welfare and, ultimately, health of their important high-ranking troops.

Aside from this paper's aims, methods and results, hope of a better, tuned up conscience of the impact of war and violence in general should be achieved, reminding the community that we should make use of Hemmingway's expression "grace under pressure" in most situations of our life and not resort to violence. War is not a solution at all.

André dos Santos Diegues is a PhD student at the NOVA FCSH, although he spent most of his academic career at the University of Lisbon, Faculty of Arts. He dedicated himself to English and American Studies, more specifically to English literature and culture. His master's thesis was based on themes such as memory, ethics, and human relationships in the works of Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* and *Klara and the Sun*. These are fictional works that portray dystopian worlds in which society becomes involved with technology, and in the case of the first book mentioned, with cloning.



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Inheriting War: Intergenerational Memory and Americanization in Don Mee Choi's *DMZ Colony*

Don Mee Choi's *DMZ Colony* (2020) explores a second-generation perspective

on the Korean War and its intergenerational aftermath, through a combination of poetry

with other mediums, such as photography and translation. This account disrupts the dominant American framing of the Korean War (1950-1953) as the “forgotten war” by showing how its psychic, linguistic, and political aftermath has persisted across generations.

Building on Clara Han’s notion of “seeing like a child” from her work *Seeing Like a Child: Inheriting the Korean War* (2021), this paper argues that Choi’s work poses that war is inherited rather than merely

remembered through fractured kinship and intergenerational memory. Like Han’s emphasis on the dispersal of catastrophe into the fabric of domestic life, Choi’s multilingual and multimedia usage expresses how war permeates everyday existence, displacing familial bonds and haunting the cultural fabric of Korean life. From this analysis, this paper questions how Choi’s work engages with and resists the violence of the cultural Americanization in South Korea.

Beatriz de Almeida Santos completed her BA in Languages, Literatures and Cultures at Nova University Lisbon and is currently completing her MA dissertation in American Studies and beginning a Doctoral program in Modern Literatures and Cultures in the same institution. She is part of the Junior Researchers in Anglo American Studies at CETAPS (Centre for English, Translation, and Anglo Portuguese Studies) as well as two research projects within the same centre. Her main research interests include science fiction studies, philosophy and religion in speculative fiction, and American studies, with a focus on the relationship between the United States and South Korea.



Catarina Moura (NOVA FCSH / CETAPS)

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After Vietnam: War, Trauma, and the American Frontier in Kristin Hannah’s *The Great Alone*

The Vietnam War profoundly shaped American culture, leaving behind legacies

of trauma, disillusionment, and fractured ideals of national identity. Kristin Hannah’s

The Great Alone (2018) places these legacies at the heart of its narrative, reworking the enduring American Frontier Myth—popularized by Frederick Jackson Turner as a symbol of progress, resilience, and individualism—through the lens of post-war experience. Set in 1970s Alaska, often imagined as “The Last Frontier,” the novel traces the Albright family’s relocation north, driven by Ernt Albright’s inability to reintegrate into civilian life after serving in Vietnam.

Ernt embodies a broken form of masculinity forged in war: paranoid, volatile, and unable to reconcile his role as soldier with that of father and husband. Alaska becomes the terrain where these conflicts play out, both as refuge and as battleground. Rather than fulfilling the promise of renewal, the frontier exposes the precariousness of domestic life and the persistence of psychological wounds

carried home from war. Hannah’s novel thus unsettles the redemptive narratives traditionally associated with the frontier by foregrounding the costs of war on families and communities, particularly through the perspective of Leni, Ernt’s daughter, whose coming-of-age is marked by violence, survival, and resilience.

This paper argues that *The Great Alone* reconfigures the frontier myth by embedding it in the cultural memory of Vietnam. Alaska, long imagined as a space of renewal, becomes instead a stage for the repetition of violence and alienation. By juxtaposing the ideal of rugged independence with the psychological costs of war, Hannah’s novel questions whether the frontier can still function as a myth of American rebirth. In doing so, it reveals how cultural narratives of exploration and endurance are unsettled by the unhealed wounds of Vietnam.

Keywords: Alaska; Myth of the Frontier; masculinity; Vietnam war; trauma

Catarina Moura is currently pursuing a PhD in Modern Literatures and Cultures at Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas (FCSH), Universidade Nova de Lisboa. She holds a bachelor’s degree in Business Management from ISCTE-IUL and a master’s degree in International Economics and European Studies from ISEG before making a shift towards humanities and literature, by completing a pre-masters in Art, Literature and Society at Maastricht University, in the Netherlands and a master’s degree in Modern Literatures and Cultures at the FSCH.

Her research focuses on contemporary literature about the U.S.-Mexico border, with special interest in the portrayal of gender, ethnicity and class in this liminal space.



Daria Rosa ((NOVA FCSH / CETAPS)

Representations of Post-War Intergenerational Trauma in Donald Ray Pollock's *The Devil All the Time*

Although not fought on American soil, the Second World War has had a profound impact on North-American culture. The War on Terror, exacerbated in the aftermath of 9/11, continues to shape the North-American mindset and literature. Building on Freud's theory of shell shock, several scholars have established a connection between war and trauma. Donald Ray Pollock's novel *The Devil All the Time* (2011) depicts intergenerational trauma, particularly stemming from Willard's traumatic experiences in the Pacific during WWII. The resurgence of violence and the heightened state of fear and instability

following 9/11 (Liénard-Yeterian and Monnet 2) are reflected in the actions of the Russel family, revealing a fragmented North-American culture, still grappling with the repercussions of war. Drawing on the notions that the experience of trauma is represented by a rupture in the "mind's experience of time, self, and the world" (Caruth 3), and that trauma is both a biological (Kolk 56), and a cultural phenomenon (Balaev 1), this presentation analyzes the cyclical and lingering effects of both WWII and the post of 9/11 era exposed in *The Devil All The Time*.

Daria Rosa is a first-year PhD student in Translation Studies, an inter-university doctoral program jointly offered by NOVA University Lisbon and Universidade Católica Portuguesa. She is currently awaiting the defense of her master's dissertation, "*Whatever Walked There Walked Alone.*" *Trauma in American Gothic Literature: A Case Study*, in which she examines the evolution of the Gothic genre through a diachronic lens. Her research interests include American Literature, Gothic Literature, Southern Gothic Literature, and Translation Studies.



Gonçalo Cholant (FLUC / CETAPS)

The Gunfire Is Only The Sound Of People Trying To Live A Little Longer: Ocean Vuong and Vietnam War

This proposal attempts to address the pervasive influence of Vietnam War and its resulting intergenerational trauma in the literary production of Ocean Vuong, considering the poetry in *Night Sky With Exit Wounds* (2016) and *Time is a Mother* (2022), as well as the novel *On Earth We Are Briefly Gorgeous* (2019). Vuong explores violence, identity and immigration to the United States as factors that help give shape to a hybrid semi-autobiographical production which is often understood as autofiction. The war itself is not represented through direct account, but through different instances of post-

memory via his matrilineal heritage. Women play an important role in his account of the impacts of the conflict and how it has affected his family and his home country. PTSD experienced by his mother and grandmother allow him to glimpse at the terrors of the war, as fragmented memories create an incomplete narration of a past plagued with violence and discrimination. Ultimately, literature becomes the space in which Vuong negotiates his own understanding of the past and how it has brought him and his family to present day America.

Keywords: Ocean Vuong; Vietnam War; Violence, Trauma, Queer literature, Autobiography.

Gonçalo Cholant holds a PhD in Modern Languages: Culture and Literature by the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Coimbra (FLUC) (2019), an MA (2012) in Feminist Studies (FLUC), Portugal, and a BA (2008) in English Language and Literature by the Federal University of Pelotas (UFPel), Brazil. He is the author of *Taking Refuge from Violence: Reconfigurations of the Bildungsroman in Kincaid, Danticat, hooks, and Morrison*, published by DeGruyter (2022), and editor of *Reinventar o social: movimentos e narrativas de resistência nas Américas*, jointly with Isabel Caldeira and Maria José Canelo, published by Coimbra University Press

(2021). He currently holds the position of Guest Assistant Professor at the Anglo-American section in the Department of Languages, Literatures, and Culture at FLUC and is a researcher at CETAPS- Centre for English, Translation, and Anglo-Portuguese Studies. He also works as a researcher at Observatório do Trauma (CES).



Isabel Oliveira (NOVA FCSH/ CETAPS)

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Dirty truths: The (de) mythification of “The Good War”

The mainstream synopses of the history of the Second World War in general, and particularly the role played by the United States in that conflict, have mostly shown the war as being the “Good War” and even “God’s War.” This has been constructed through several means as already discussed in several works.

For this presentation, I will deal with the specific case of the so-called “Big Business”, big American corporations such as Coca-Cola, IBM, Ford, and General Motors, among others, which throughout

the war presented themselves as the saviors of the free world but had connections with Nazi Germany before, during and after the war.

Several examples of how the Big Business used advertising during the war will be analyzed and simultaneously compared with what was effectively happening in Hitler’s Third Reich, thus showing the dirty truth about how American corporations were only interested in their profits or “what’s in it for me?”

Isabel Oliveira (former Martins) is Associate Professor at the Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas, Universidade Nova de Lisboa (Faculty of Social and Human Sciences, New University of Lisbon, Portugal). She holds a PhD in Contemporary American literature – *The Good War: Perspectives and Contributions of the American War Novel*. Her main research interests are connected to three areas: Portuguese-American Studies, American Studies and Literary Translation, which she mainly develops at CETAPS (Center for English, Translation and

Anglo-Portuguese Studies). She has published and taught in these areas since 1983. She is the Director of Ilnova (Instituto de Línguas da Universidade Nova de Lisboa/) and a member of several national and international literary and cultural associations, such as APEAA, ULICES (University of Lisbon Centre for English Studies), ESSE, EAAS, ABIL, PSA, EST and ACLA.



Mário António Alves Ribeiro (FLUP)

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**The (Invisible) War: World War II, paranoia and pandemic(s)
in *Nemesis* (2010) by Philip Roth**

In his last novel, *Nemesis* (2010), Philip Roth explores the effects of a polio epidemic on a Jewish community, through the point of view of 23-year-old protagonist Bucky Cantor, in 1944 Newark. As the narrative progresses, Roth explores Cantor's ironic duality: if on one hand, he is unfit to be drafted to fight alongside his friends during World War II, due to his poor eyesight; on another, he is also unfit to defend his young students during a polio pandemic in the Weequahic neighborhood. Throughout the novel, Roth explores the dramas of a pandemic, alongside the panic and paranoia regarding the disease and the dissemination of 'fake news', much like the

Covid-19 pandemic in the United States. This essay will explore the historical context of Roth's novel as well as to explore the paranoia regarding American culture and how there were minority groups targeted as scapegoats, during these two pandemic periods in United States history. On a parallel perspective, it will also be analyzed how the Covid-19 pandemic was used as a political weapon, leading into a political polarization during Trump's administration, and how that same fear and paranoia lead to the United States being one of the countries with more covid-19 cases.

Mário António Alves Ribeiro is a Portuguese researcher born in Chaves, Trás-Os-Montes. Made his superior education in Oporto, in FLUP (*Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do*

Porto) where he graduated in the Languages, Literatures and Cultures course, in 2021. In 2024, he obtained his master's degree, in Anglo-American Studies, with the dissertation: "Uma Terra de Sangue, Homens e Cavalos: Identidade e Violência em *All the Pretty Horses* (1992) de Cormac McCarthy e *The Power of the Dog* (1967) de Thomas Savage". After his master, he worked with University Jean Monnet (UJM) as a teacher in the Applied Foreign Languages Department.



Rogério Miguel Puga (NOVA FCSH / CETAPS)

Anthologizing the (Abject) Psychological Effect of the Iraq War through Soundscapes in Phil Klay's *Redeployment* (2014)

American author Phil Klay (b. 1983) served in the United States Marine Corps (2005 to 2009) and was deployed to the Anbar Province in 2007–2008, where he witnessed the effects of war. In 2014, Klay published his first book, *Redeployment*, a collection of twelve short stories about the experiences of soldiers during the Iraq War, specifically Operation Iraqi Freedom (2003–2010). This paper deals with the representation of the grotesque and absurd

dimensions of war through the analysis of traumatic noises that constitute sonic (sub)plots used to portray everyday life in the distant and unknown theatre of war. I analyse how the soldier's literary project aestheticises the many dimensions of a soldier's life and chronicles his sensory, physiological and affective perception of soundscapes, traumatic emotions, fears and thoughts.

Rogério Miguel Puga is an Associate Professor with habilitation at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities (Nova University, Lisbon). His research interests are Travel Writing, British Contemporary Fiction, Brexlit, and History of the Portuguese and British Empires (India, Macau and Japan). He is co-editor of the Anglo-Iberian Studies series (Peter Lang).



Rui Mateus (NOVA FCSH / CETAPS)

Cycles of Conflict: Vietnam and the Military Imagination in Robert Jordan's *The Wheel of Time*

American author Robert Jordan is best known as the author of *The Wheel of Time* series, an epic fantasy saga that is popular for exploring themes of mythology, gender, and religion. Jordan was also a U.S. Army helicopter gunner in the Vietnam War, serving in two tours, for which he was awarded a Distinguished Flying Cross. His personal experience in Vietnam is clearly visible in his writing, and it informs his portrayal of violence, leadership and the emotional toll of war. The aim of this paper is to examine how *The Wheel of Time* series mirrors that experience.

The battle scenes across the novels are a reflection the chaotic intensity of modern combat. Problems such as confusion, sudden setbacks, and strategy replace the unrealistic aspects common in heroic fantasy novels. Characters such as Rand al'Thor show symptoms resembling post-traumatic stress like emotional

detachment, paranoia, and memories that resonate with veterans' experiences. Similarly, the mercenary army called Band of the Red Hand captures the camaraderie, dark humor, and fatalism of military units. Mat Cauthon's tactical expertise, for example, also replicates the reality of a soldier constantly looking for what may go wrong in a battle or how to take advantage of the terrain or disposition of enemy troops. Additionally, Perrin Aybara's campaign in the Two Rivers in *The Shadow Rising* depicts the emotional burden of responsibility and loss.

Ultimately, by reading *The Wheel of Time* in light of the author's experience of the Vietnam War, this paper aims to place Jordan within a tradition of American veterans whose work is haunted by war, which will also contribute to understanding how fantasy literature engages with contemporary history.

Rui Mateus has a PhD in Modern Literatures and Cultures at NOVA University of Lisbon. He received a PhD scholarship in 2020 by the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT) (2020.05334.BD) for his doctoral project on fantasy studies. He holds a Master's degree in Modern Literatures and Cultures at NOVA University of Lisbon with a dissertation on the

categorization of fantasy literature. He is a collaborator CETAPS, a member of the International Association for the Fantastic in the Arts, and a member of APEAA.



Teresa Botelho (NOVA FCSH / CETAPS)

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After The War: Writing the Return from Internment Camps in the Fiction of John Okada and the Drama of Philip Kan Gotanda

The internment of 120,000 West Coast Japanese American during World War II, forcibly dislocated to military operated crowded camps in desolate areas of the West and South, surrounded by barbed wire, under suspicion that they might be agents working for the Tokyo government, is remembered as a grave injustice and as shameful period of American history, only redressed by the official apology contained in the Civil Liberties Act of 1988. The literary representation of this experience and of its legacy can be structured in four time frames, beginning with the short pieces written inside the camps by voices that described aspects of their confinement. After the war, some fiction about the camps was produced, mostly by non Japanese-American authors engaged in the denunciation of what they saw as an injustice that has to be exposed,

but it was only in the 1950s that the first novel by a Nisei author, John Okada's *No-No Boy* engaged directly that experience, to be followed by a new wave of fiction, dedicated to remembering, reimagining and asserting the visibility of what should not be erased or made normal.

This paper will discuss two texts from different periods which share a frame of observation, namely that of characters who are returning, after the end of the war, from the camps where they had been interned– John Okada's novel *No-No Boy* (1957) and the post- redress play *Sisters Matsumoto* (2004) by Philip Kan Gotanda, and will analyze the strategies of telling they engage, connecting them comparatively with the negotiations of selfhood and belonging framed by the chronology of their production.

Teresa Botelho is an Associate Professor of American Studies (retired) at The Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, NOVA University of Lisbon. She is convener of the research strand *American Intersections* at CETAPS (Center for English, Translation and Anglo-Portuguese Studies), and a member of the *Mapping Utopianisms* strand at the same research center. She is also a member of the *Challenging Precarity Global Network*, of the *European Association for the Study of Literature, Culture, and the Environment* and of the *Ibero-American Network of Environmental Humanities*. She has published extensively on African-American Asian- American and Arab-American literature, utopian and dystopian literature and literary satire. Her current interests include climate change fiction, representations of environmental justice and refugee literature.

