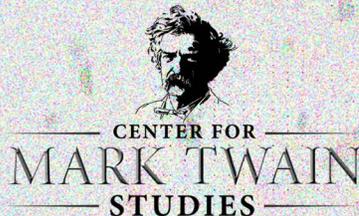


# *Abolition Studies*

*9th Annual Quarry Farm Symposium  
September 30 ~ October 2, 2022*



- 1. Hamilton Hall\*
- 2. Fassett Commons\*
- 3. Cowles Hall\*
- 4. Mark Twain Study\*
- 5. Gillett Memorial Hall\*
- 6. Alumni Hall
- 7. Carnegie Hall\*
- 8. Kolker Hall
- 9. Watson Fine Arts
- 10. Harris Hall
- 11. McGraw Hall
- 12. The College Store
- 13. College Post Office
- 14. The College Cottages



- 15. Anderson Hall
- 16. Columbia Hall
- 17. Meier Hall
- 18. Gannett Tripp Library
- 19. Clarke Health Center
- 20. Twin Towers
- 21. Campus Center
- 22. Speidel Gymnasium  
in Emerson Hall
- 23. Gibson Theatre  
in Emerson Hall
- 24. Tompkins Hall\*
- 25. Perry Hall
- 26. The Office of Admissions  
& Financial Aid
- 27. Campus Field

\*Listed on the National Register of Historic Places

# ABOLITION STUDIES

## The Ninth Annual Quarry Farm Symposium

### *Symposium Chairs*

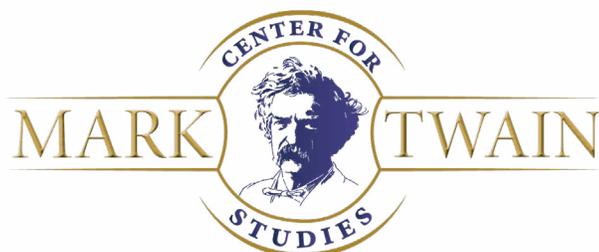
**Jesse A. Goldberg**, New Mexico Highlands University  
**Nancy Quintanilla**, California State Polytechnic, Pomona

### *Keynote Speaker*

**Sarah Haley**, Columbia University

### *Presenters*

**Alex Alston**, Columbia University  
**M. Cecilia Azar**, Brown University  
**Srimayee Basu**, University of California, Irvine  
**Thomas Dichter**, Harvard University  
**Christopher Paul Harris**, University of California, Irvine  
**remus jackson**, University of Florida  
**Elleza Kelley**, Yale University  
**Cait N. Parker**, Purdue University  
**LaVelle Ridley**, University of Michigan  
**Margarita Lila Rosa**, Princeton University  
**Matt Seybold**, Elmira College  
**Kia Turner**, Stanford Graduate School of Education  
**Michelle Velasquez-Potts**, University of California, Santa Cruz  
**Darion Wallace**, Stanford Graduate School of Education  
**Henry Washington, Jr.**, Wesleyan University



# SYMPOSIUM SCHEDULE

## Friday, September 30 in Cowles Hall on the Elmira College Campus

### 5:00 p.m. Opening Reception

Enjoy hor d'oeuvres, an assortment of drinks, and conversation with fellow symposium attendees in close proximity to the Mark Twain Study and the Mark Twain Exhibit.

### 6:00 p.m. Opening Dinner and Keynote Address

*Symposium Welcome  
Dinner*

Joseph Lemak, Director, Center for Mark Twain Studies

*Keynote Introduction*

Jesse Goldberg

*Keynote Address*

Sarah Haley

### “Gender and the Abolitionist Present”

This talk raises a series of questions about the relationship between abolitionist temporality and abolitionist everyday life. Drawing from Robin D.G. Kelley’s framework of “love, study, and struggle,” how must we understand the peril and potential of abolitionist scholarly work within our current moment? What are the tensions and compatibilities between abolition “study” and “studies”? How do abolitionist theories of time challenge concepts of the present and presentism? Can we better understand carceral continuity, carceral gendering, and carceral humanism by taking up Saidiya Hartman’s call to apprehend violation where it is barely discernible? How can we elaborate abolitionist notions of time and history to more effectively oppose the increasingly pervasive idea that abolition is commensurate with liberal reform? What would it mean to consider such questions through scholarly collectives rather via the fracturing, fragmenting, aggrandizing, and individualizing culture of academia?

**Sarah Haley**, Associate Professor at Columbia University, has research interests in the history of gender and women, carceral history, Black feminist history and theory, prison abolition, and feminist archival methods. She is the author of *No Mercy Here: Gender, Punishment, and the Making of Jim Crow Modernity*, published by the University of North Carolina Press in 2016. *No Mercy Here* received awards from the Association of Black Women Historians, the American Historical Association, the American Studies Association, the National Women’s Studies Association, and the Southern Association for Women Historians and was selected for the National Book Foundation’s 2020-2021 Literature for Justice Reading List. Professor Haley co-edited a special issue of *Souls: A Critical Journal of Black Politics, Culture, and Society* with Professors Prudence Cumberbatch and Dayo Gore. Her writing has been published in edited volumes as well as journals including *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, *The Journal of African American History*, *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, and *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory*. She is currently working on a book titled *The Carceral Interior: A Black Feminist Study of American Punishment, 1966-2016*.



## Saturday, October 1 at Quarry Farm

**8:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.      Breakfast**

**9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.      Session One: 19th-Century Carceral Histories**

Alex Alston, "Animal Afterlives: 19th Century Abolitionism & The Discourse of Species"

Thomas Dichter, "Captivity and Abolition in Boarding School Literature: Between Elmira and Carlisle"

Margarita Lila Rosa, "Riotous Women, Criminalization, and the Voyeuristic Press in 1890s California"

**10:45 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.      Session Two: Anti/Carceral Texts**

LaVelle Ridley, "Imaginative Abolition, Political Life Writing, and Black Trans Feminist Blueprints"

remus jackson, "'This is the kind of society I'm looking for, anyway': Krysta Morningstarr & The Radical Potential of Prisoner's Comics"

Cait N. Parker, "'In Love, Devotion, and Continuous Struggle': Revolutionary Lesbian Abolitionists, 1970s-1990s"

Srimayee Basu, "The Entanglements of Emancipation and Juvenile Discipline in the Early Black Prison Memoir"

**12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.      Lunch**

**1:30 p.m. - 3:15 p.m.      Session Three: Contemporary Resonances**

Michelle Velasquez-Potts, "Slow Death and Domestication of Indefinite Detention"

Elleza Kelley, "Fly, Catch, Stay: Geographies of Abolition, Geographies of Fugitivity"

Kia Turner & Darien Wallace, "Exploring Anti-Carceral Education: Towards Mapping and Historicizing Contemporary Educators' Theory and Praxis in Abolitionist Terms"

Christopher Paul Harris, "The Last President: Notes on Abolition and the (un)Making of the World System"

**3:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.      Session Four: 19th-Century Anti-Carceral Literary Critique"**

Matt Seybold, "Mark Twain, The Abolitionist"

M. Cecelia Azar, "Liberating the Punchline: Abolitionist Practices in *Running One Thousand Miles for Freedom*"

Henry Washington, Jr., "*Criminalis Sequitur Ventrum*: Post-Slavery Discipline's Biological Myths of Origin"

**6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.      Closing Reception**

The gathering will take place on the Porch at Quarry Farm where participants can discuss the day's events, take in the view of the Chemung River Valley, and enjoy an assortment of refreshments. CMTS will also conduct a tour of Quarry Farm for all those interested.

**7:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.      Closing Remarks and Dinner**

## Sunday, October 2 at Quarry Farm

**8:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.      Farewell Breakfast**

# ABOLITION STUDIES

## *The Ninth Annual Quarry Farm Symposium*

### ABSTRACTS

(in alphabetical order by last name)

**Alex Alston**, *Columbia University*

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“Animal Afterlives: 19th Century Abolitionism & The Discourse of Species”

Printed by William Lloyd Garrison’s *American Anti-Slavery Society* during the 1830’s, *Slave’s Friend* was a didactic 19th century abolitionist publication directed at children in the US North and meant to instruct them regarding their moral duties or obligations toward (and, implicitly, their status above) nonhuman animals and enslaved persons. Triangulating a truncated reading of *Slave’s Friend* as well as key canonical and lesser-known 19th century American and Caribbean slave narratives, this paper aims to tease out the logic of a hegemonic abolitionist imagination as it situated blackness in a precarious position in relationship to the question of universal humanity and the problem of species. Following the symposium’s call to trouble the very notion of continuity that would allow us to speak of abolition as a transhistorical phenomenon, I want to think about the ways in which (white) abolitionism of the 19th century is overdetermined by a set of ultimately colonial Humanist coordinates that needed to mobilize metaphors of nonhuman animality to articulate the moral wrong or evil of slavery. What emerges on the pages of the narratives of Moses Roper, Mary Prince and others is a struggle at the site of this language of nonhuman animality. This struggle is worth exploring as it calls into question the relationship between the *long duree* of abolition and what Sylvia Wynter and other black studies scholars have theorized as the colonial “genre of the Human” or “Man.” If, I ask, as historian Jennifer Morgan argues, the profoundly gendered “animalization” of blackness was not strictly a pro-slavery project, given that chattel slavery’s most virulent opponents often mobilized this iconography or imagination, how do we tend to and take stock of this historically situated material and symbolic ambivalence in contemporary discourse on “abolition?”

**Alex Alston** is a sixth year Ph.D. Candidate and Provost’s Diversity Fellow in the English and Comparative Literature department at Columbia University. His research takes a discursive-material approach in exploring chattel slavery and its afterlives, anti-colonial histories and theories of the Human, and folk aesthetics, privileging nineteenth & twentieth century Afro-American and Afro-diasporic literature, especially the (neo)slave narrative and the novel. His dissertation, tentatively titled “Animal Ambivalence: Black Literature and the Discourse of Species,” was awarded the 2022-2023 Mellon/ACLS Dissertation Completion Fellowship. Therein, he tracks some of the ways that Afro-American and Afro-diasporic authors have deconstructed and represented the sign and the body of nonhuman animality from the slave narrative genre through the late twentieth century novel, using black ecofeminist methods to place the work of these creative intellectuals in conversation with contemporary black studies. Alex has taught courses on African-American history and literature at Hostos Community College in the Bronx, NY as well as the University of California, Riverside. He holds a B.A. from Duke University and an M.A. from Columbia, each in black studies.



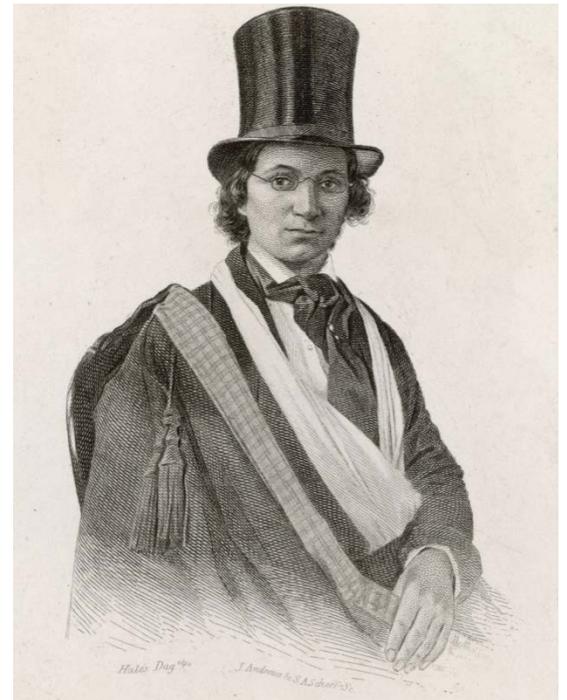
“The Hunted Slaves” by Richard Ansdell (1861) oil on canvas

**M. Cecelia Azar, Brown University**  
mcazar@brown.edu

“Liberating the Punchline: Abolitionist Practices in *Running One Thousand Miles for Freedom*”

Tracing a legacy of imaginative abolitionist practices to nineteenth-century slave narratives, “Liberating the Punchline” contends that moments of humor in slave narratives operated within a broader historical framework of America Sentimentalism to unravel the racial and gendered inner workings of slavery.

Nineteenth-century white American Sentimentalist narratives aimed to abolish slavery through rhetoric that endowed slaves with human emotions and simultaneously evacuated them of citizenship. Such exclusionary and racist narratives, as exemplified in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, operated through rhetoric of similitude and difference that adhered to binaries of race and gender, where African American slaves feel but are incapable of thought. While most of these popular narratives were deployed through mainstream outlets, like periodicals, by and for whites, slave narratives of the time built on sentimentalist premises that appeal to the reader’s negative affect (i.e., sorrow, pity). Yet, a closer inspection of the pathos deployed in slave and fugitive narratives reveals how other affective practices opened different ways to think about and dismantle the racists and gendered systems that mobilized chattel slavery.



“Ellen Craft, *The Fugitive Slave.*”  
Engraving from *London Illustrated News*  
(April 19, 1851)

In *Running One Thousand Miles for Freedom*, Ellen and William Craft use humor to subvert an imaginative impossibility of their time—mainly the idea that humor could ever be a subversive system. In recent year, scholars, like Riley Snorton and Uri McMillan, have turned to the politics of passing as a performance that exposes slavery as a racial and gendered system. In “Liberating the Punchline,” I focus on the Crafts deployment of humor, in its form and as a textual practice, to enact abolitionists practices within the genre of slave narratives. Their passing performance both in their escape from slavery and in the text allows the Crafts to engage in abolitionists practices

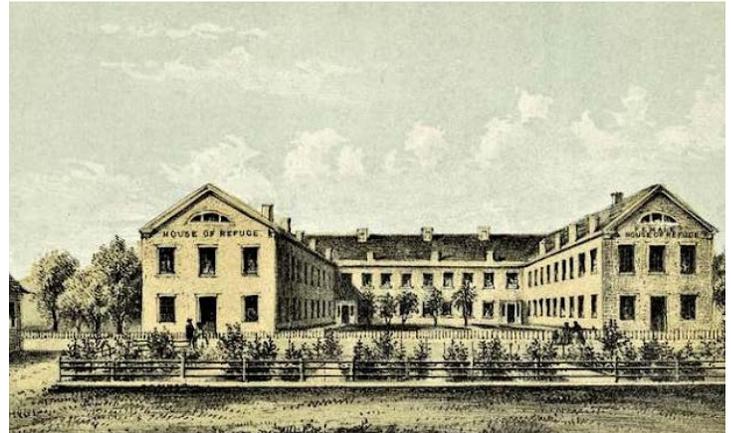
that offer liberatory practices in the present through the use humor in different ways: positioning difference as a means of equality, escaping formulaic expectations of slave narratives as a genre tied to white benefactors, and revealing the homosocial/sexual underpinnings of slavery. In closing, “Liberating the Punchline” turns to contemporary uses of humor in social media to illustrate how its deployment in the face of systemic oppression by marginalized people still works as an abolitionist practice against the imaginative barriers discussed by contemporary abolitionists.

**M. Cecilia Azar** is a Ph.D. student in Performance Studies at Brown University. She has an MA in English and Gender and Sexuality Studies from Cal State Los Angeles and the University of Maryland College Park, respectively. Her research interest rest at the intersection of affect, displacement, and performances of survival in the Americas. Her work appears in the *Middle Atlantic Review of Latin American Studies*, and *Dark Tourism of the American West*, a collection of essays edited by Jennifer Dawes.

**Srimayee Basu**, *University of California Irvine*  
srimayeb@uci.edu

“The Entanglements of Emancipation and Juvenile Discipline in the Early Black Prison Memoir”

Austin Reed’s *The Life and Adventures of a Haunted Convict* (1859) is the earliest known prison memoir by a black inmate in American literary history. Reed was born in New York in 1823, and his work was written between 1858 and 1859 during his incarceration in the Auburn State Prison, and briefly in the Clinton State Prison. While there has been a rich body of scholarship on Reed’s memoir in recent years, I focus on a relatively underexplored dimension of his work: his portrayal of juvenile delinquency, particularly with regard to his incarceration in the New York House of Refuge from 1833 to 1839. I argue that Reed’s memoir offers us ways of theorizing black childhood’s centrality to the long nineteenth century projects of emancipation and prison reform. Childhood occupied an important place in New York’s racial history. The state enacted the Gradual Emancipation Act in 1799 which freed children born to enslaved mothers but required them to work as indentured servants for their mothers’ owners throughout their youth. In 1817, the act was amended to abolish the enslavement of children born after 1799. While Reed was born in 1823, his work serves as a testimony to the continuance of racialized indenture long after the 1817 amendment. The New York House of Refuge, where Reed was incarcerated, was the culmination of the penal reform efforts of two prominent Quaker abolitionists: Thomas Eddy and John Griscom. They saw the institution as a social antidote for the “poverty and crime following the war of 1812” and instrumental in transforming wayward youth into the docile working poor (Pickett 23). Though there is now a broadly held consensus that childhood is a modern invention, Reed’s rendition of childhood complicates this argument by showing black childhood to be principally a disciplinary classification. My paper will explore the ways in which Reed’s abolitionism ties together seemingly disparate strands of reformism and is not merely a rebuttal of carceral institutions but of childhood itself.



“N.Y. House of Refuge. 1832” Lithograph (1864)  
Wallach Division Picture Collection, New York Public Library

## References

- Pickett, Robert S. “The Society for the Prevention of Pauperism (1815–23).” *House of Refuge: Origins of Juvenile Reform in New York State, 1815–1857*. Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press. Print.
- Reed, Austin. *The Life and Adventures of a Haunted Convict*. Caleb Smith, ed. New York: The Modern Library, 2016. Print.

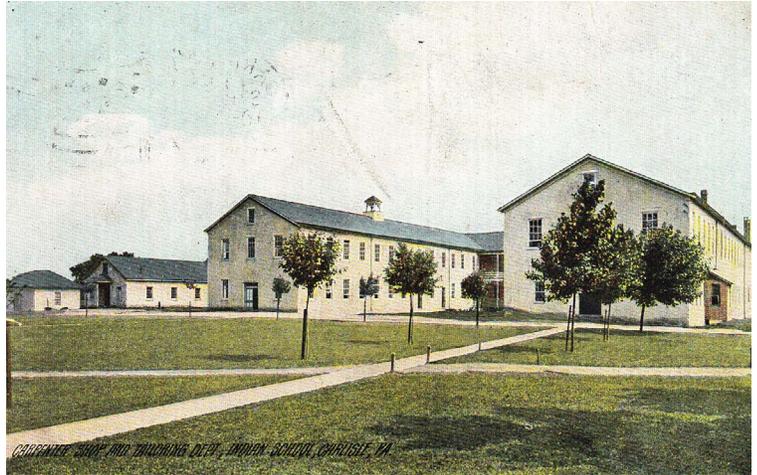
Srimayee Basu is Assistant Professor of English at the University of California, Irvine. Her research areas include eighteenth- and nineteenth- century American Literature, Black Atlantic Studies, and Labor History. Her current book project, *Punishment and Revolution*, reads Anglophone Black Atlantic literature alongside penal history and the histories of slavery and abolition in the long nineteenth-century, and offers a new account of how extra-economic violence racialized New World labor.

**Thomas Dichter**, *Harvard University*

thomas\_dichter@hms.harvard.edu

“Captivity and Abolition in Boarding School Literature: Between Elmira and Carlisle”

A new era of punishment took hold in Elmira, New York in 1876, when Zebulon Brockway’s Elmira State Reformatory opened. Focused on young men incarcerated for their first criminal offense, this prison heralded a renewal of rehabilitationism and a therapeutic approach to punishment. The reformatory promised an improved way to transform the wayward into law-abiding workers. Simultaneously, across the Pennsylvania state line and a few hundred miles down the winding Susquehanna River, another program of transformation-through-confinement for youth was being established at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School. Founded by the warden of a military prison in 1879, Carlisle set the paradigm of assimilationist “Indian education” aimed at cultural erasure as it would be practiced at the dozens of other off-reservation federal boarding schools founded between 1879 and 1920.



“Carpenter Shop and Tailoring Dept, Indian School, Carlisle PA.”  
Postcard (1909) Dickinson College Archives & Special Collections

This paper takes the simultaneous development of reformatories and federal boarding schools (and the ideological affinities shared across these networks of institutions) as a framework for reading literature by survivors of the boarding school system. How do these writers challenge the U.S. state in both its carceral and its settler colonial dimensions? I will read literary texts by former boarding school students Zitkala-Ša and D’Arcy McNickle for the abolitionist impulses that inform their writing. In her short stories from 1900 and 1901, Yankton Dakota writer, performer, and activist Zitkala-Ša (also known as Gertrude Simmons Bonnin) highlights the collusion of boarding schools, land theft, and imprisonment—drawing on her own boarding school experiences in her efforts to organize Native people against US settler colonialism. In his 1936 novel, *The Surrounded*, McNickle (an enrolled member of the Salish and Kootenai from a Métis family) demonstrates how the colonial and carceral space of the boarding school was repurposed by Native students towards drastically different ends than administrators intended.

**Thomas Dichter** is a contingent faculty member, clerical worker, and labor organizer at Harvard University, where he teaches in the History and Literature program. He holds a PhD in English from the University of Pennsylvania. His research on U.S. culture and the carceral state has been published in *J19: The Journal of Nineteenth-Century Americanists*, *American Literature*, and *Law, Culture, and the Humanities*. Prior to moving to Boston, he was a member of Decarcerate PA, a grassroots coalition working to end mass incarceration in Pennsylvania.

**Christopher Paul Harris**, *University of California, Irvine*  
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“The Last President: Notes on Abolition and the (un)Making of the World System”

The 2020 uprisings, with their demand to “defund the police,” helped reignite conversations about abolition and a world free of institutions that cause harm, particularly for those historically marginalized. While these imaginings rightfully attack the carceral logic(s) and violence of the neoliberal state, especially within and across national contexts, there is a tendency, one presently changing, to leave the pillars of liberal governance, and the constellation of historical factors that brought that mode of governance about, afield from the crucible of contestation. From the purview of the United States – the current imperial core – these pillars include Congress, the Supreme Court, and the Presidency. Using the U.S. presidency as both a symbol of the modern “Head of State” and as the embodiment of the global nation state form as such, this paper proceeds from the premise that the presidency should be considered a harmful



“Battle for Palm Tree Hill” by January Suchodolski (1845) oil on canvas

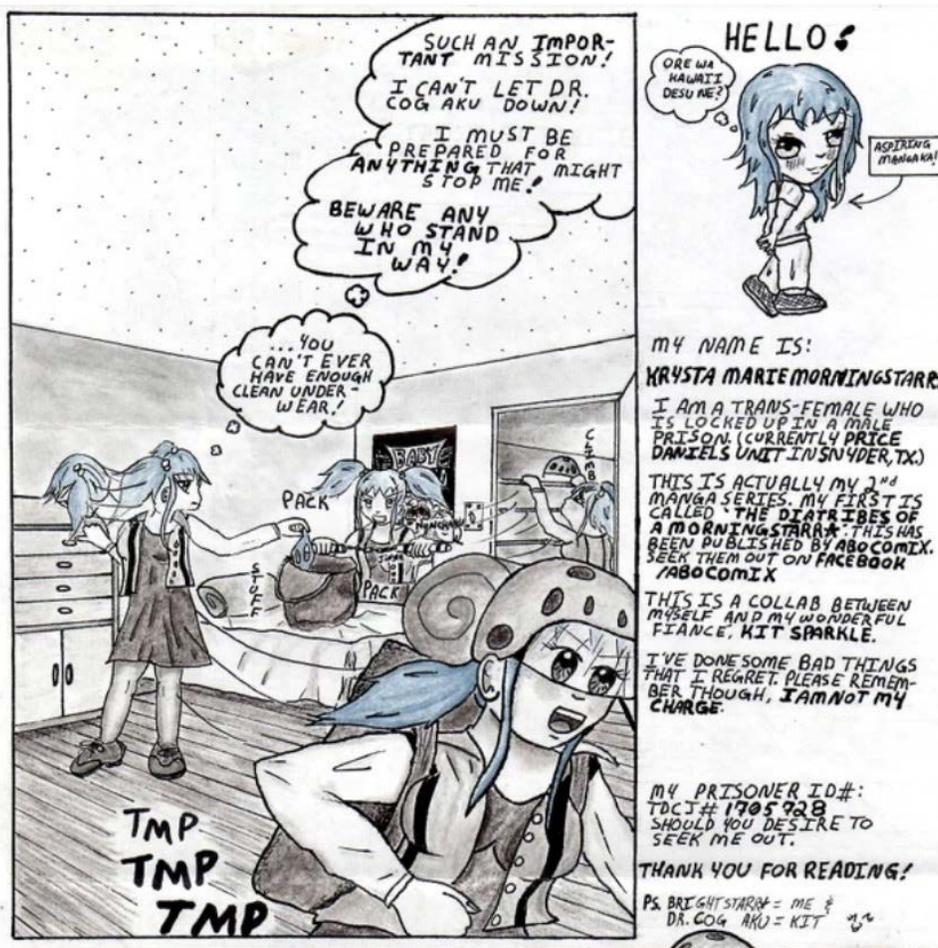
institution inextricably linked to coloniality and anti-Blackness. It argues that, in general a sense, we need to dismantle and reimagine the world system, along with its attendant “carceral archipelago,” if we are to succeed in realizing an abolitionist future. Just as crucially, we need to heed the historical specificity of abolition itself: its origins and evolution as it pertains to the emergence and preservation of the geopolitical order in dialogue with the resistance struggles that have arisen against it. After all, abolition originated not out of sympathy for the Black slave, as C.L.R James teaches us. Instead, it was mounted by the British to dull the flourishing of French colonial power in the aftermath of the American War for Independence, just before the revolution in France and the slave uprising that created Haiti. The mechanisms of revolt, perfected in San Domingo but present across the Atlantic world – the Black radical tradition – were the seeds of the 2020 uprisings and cement the understanding that abolition requires nothing short of the end of the world system.

**Christopher Paul Harris** is an Assistant Professor in the department of Global and International Studies at the University of California, Irvine. His academic writing has appeared in the journals *South Atlantic Quarterly*, *Contemporary Political Theory*, and *Social Science Quarterly*. In the Fall of 2023, his first book, *To Build a Black Future: Blackness and Social Movement in the Time of #BlackLivesMatter* will be published by Princeton University Press.

“This is the kind of society I’m looking for, anyway’: Krysta Morningstarr & The Radical Potential of Prisoner’s Comics”

In this presentation, I highlight the work of incarcerated trans comic artist Krysta Morningstarr to illuminate the potential for - and limitations of - radical prisoner comic-making as an act of resistance. Morningstarr’s comics are published and distributed by A.B.O. Comix, a collective of “outside” artists/activists and incarcerated or “inside” queer and trans collaborators. Through her work with A.B.O. Comix Morningstarr participates in what I call trans world-making strategies: she uses her comics as a platform for dialogue with the “free” world, attending to the often-brutal reality of queer life under carcerality, resisting the isolation caused by imprisonment while envisioning new abolitionist futures. The comics format particularly allows her to capture both reality and potentiality in a way that bridges community disruption caused by the prison, because comics use a wide array of symbolic and formal visual and textual elements. Through A.B.O., Morningstarr’s comics circulate to readers both outside of, and critically, within the prison system, to create new, transgressive forms of community between groups occupying various, not necessarily overlapping, subject positions. Placing Morningstarr in the nexus of these historical and contemporary practices, I argue that her work shows us how incarcerated trans artists trouble carceral logics by offering new worlds to participate in.

remus jackson is a genderqueer cartoonist pursuing a PhD in English at the University of Florida with a research focus on queer/trans embodiment in comics and zines, critical prison studies, and museum studies. They received their M.A. in English from the University of Florida.



Comic panels by Krysta Marie Morningstarr (2017), introducing her Krysta Morningstarr avatar

**Elleza Kelley**, *Yale University*  
elleza.kelley@yale.edu

“Fly, Catch, Stay: Geographies of Abolition, Geographies of Fugitivity”

What can literary and visual representations of black geographies teach us about abolition—as study, as practice, as insistence? And vice versa. How do these concerns and questions speak to and through one another? My academic work concerns these representations, finely combing them for what political utility they may have to help us feel our way out of carceral neoliberalism and racial capitalism. Time and again, geographies of abolition and fugitivity appear: both in concert with one another and, at times, in tension and opposition with one another. These tensions compel us to consider the differences, and relations, between running away from the house and tearing it down. What forms of new life are made on the run, or in ruins, I ask, and where do runs and ruins fall apart?

Through a series of meandering close readings across literary and visual media, I trace how black geographies and their capture (or resistance to capture) power abolitionist imaginations, abolitionist practices, and abolitionist demands to remake the world or, as Ruth Wilson Gilmore puts it, to “change everything.” If carcerality seeps out of the prison and inflects the quotidian architectures of all life, inflects thought and movement, what kind of geographical practices are necessary to unbuild carceral capitalism’s settlement and terraforming? What kinds of errant improper incendiary forms of study must we engage in and produce? My paper proposes that we can imagine life through the assembled histories of those who have reimaged place. Rather than make an argument, I’ll seek insight, I’ll fabricate dialogues across space and time, I’ll model theories and methods after runaway slaves, displaced ghosts, and captive teens—those who can fly and those who must stay.

**Elleza Kelley** is an Assistant Professor in the departments of African American Studies and English at Yale University. Kelley earned her Ph.D. in English from Columbia University and her B.A. from Wesleyan University. She works on African American literature and visual art, with an emphasis on black geographies and radical spatial practice in the United States. Her current book project looks at practices of inscription and mark-making as modes of spatial production, representation, and reinvention. You can find her writing in *Antipode: A Radical Journal of Geography*, *The New Inquiry*, *Cabinet Magazine*, *Deem Journal*, and elsewhere.



**Cait N. Parker**, *Purdue University*  
parke345@purdue.edu

“In Love, Devotion, and Continuous Struggle”: revolutionary lesbian abolitionists, 1970s-1990s

By 1980, as social movements for sexual liberation and prison reform in the United States waned from public focus, revolutionary lesbian and abolitionist communities continued to resist the carceral reach of the Nixon and Reagan eras. This research illuminates the intersections between anti-carceral and lesbian activists from the 1970s through the 1990s. Despite their absence from existing queer and abolitionist literature, these revolutionaries hold a place in the genealogy of anti-carceral and abolitionist movements. I focus on lesbian activists who formed anti-carceral political organizations, helped publish abolitionist material, and were imprisoned for their revolutionary actions. While some of these activists were not referring to themselves as abolitionists decades ago, their political values and goals were abolitionist in theory and practice. Using archival sources and oral histories, I argue that these revolutionary lesbian activists were practicing abolitionist care, essential to the abolition of prisons and the carceral state. In *The Care Manifesto*, the Care Collective states that to “put care centre stage means recognising and embracing our interdependencies.” Through the intersection of anti-carceral and lesbian activism, these materials highlight the radical possibilities of recognizing interdependencies as resistance to state-sponsored carceral logic and the power of a politics of care.



*Image from Breaking de Chains of Legalized U.S. Slavery.  
Courtesy of Duke University Archives*

**Cait N. Parker** (she/her) is a fourth year PhD Candidate in American Studies at Purdue University. Cait is an instructor of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and LGBTQ+ Studies at Purdue. She has an MA in English and a BA in History, and her research focuses on LGBTQ+ history and critical carceral studies. Cait's dissertation explores revolutionary lesbian abolitionists organizing in the 1970s – 1990s.

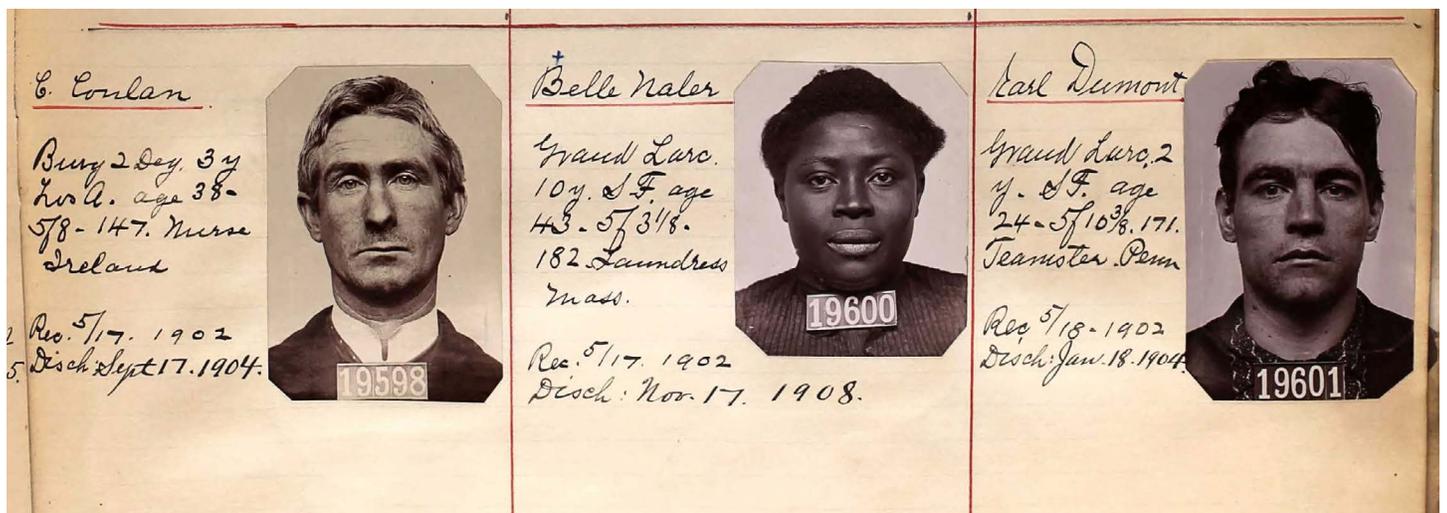
“Imaginative Abolition, Political Life Writing, and Black Trans Feminist Blueprints”

CeCe McDonald, a black trans woman, read extensively while incarcerated in Minneapolis for acts of justified self-defense. Among the notable authors was academic-activist Angela Y. Davis. McDonald also penned and circulated letters while incarcerated, and her growing prominence in abolitionist movement circles after her release resulted in her writing the forward to the 2015 second edition of Eric A. Stanley and Nat Smith's *Captive Genders: Trans Embodiment and the Prison Industrial Complex*. There, she develops the framework of *imaginative abolition*, one in which constant political education and reflection is critical to “kicking down the walls” of carceral spaces. Imaginative abolition, then, becomes an important framework to bring in others to movement work through education and solidarity. In this paper, I close read selections from McDonald's published prison letters alongside selections from the 1974 edition of *Angela Davis: An Autobiography*, tracing the developments of abolitionist thought and struggle against (trans)misogynoir in the genre of black women's political life writing. I argue that McDonald extends this genre by offering a conceptualization of abolition that relies on the imaginative aspects of self-making and self-defense. This comparative analysis demonstrates the extent to which life writing by radical black women continues to be a strong element in the struggle for liberation from oppression.



Writer and activist Leslie Feinberg expresses solidarity and care with writer and activist CeCe McDonald in 2012

**LaVelle Ridley** (she/her) is a queer black transsexual writer, scholar, and dreamer whose work meets at the intersection of transgender studies, black feminist theory, and life writing studies. Finishing her PhD in English & Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Michigan, Ridley is at work on her dissertation which articulates how life writing by black trans women functions as tools for political resistance and imaginative freedom-making for the gendered-racially-sexually oppressed. She has work published or forthcoming from *GLQ*, *Feminist Studies*, and *TSQ*, the latter for which she serves as Associate Book Review Editor.



Belle Naler, San Quentin State Prison Records (1908)

**Margarita Lila Rosa, Stanford University**  
mlrosa@stanford.edu

“Riotous Women, Criminalization, and the Voyeuristic Press in 1890s California”

Black women who migrated to the American west challenged carceral geographies in order to expand their opportunities for survival. This talk follows the life of Belle Naler, a Black sexual laborer who migrated to California in 1889, examining the carceral state’s persecution of her, coupled with the press’ voyeuristic affinity for her. Using newspapers and prison records, this talk engages in a contestation of the historical archive in order to explore Belle Naler’s own narration of her persecution.

**Margarita Lila Rosa** received her PhD from Princeton University from the Department of Comparative Literature with a graduate certificate from the Department African American Studies in 2021. Rosa’s research explores the legal and social history of hereditary slavery across the Spanish and Lusophone Americas through archival research in Cuba, Dominican Republic, Mexico, and Brazil. Her concurrent research explores the expansion of the carceral state in the late nineteenth century in California and Rio de Janeiro.

**Matt Seybold, Elmira College**  
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“Mark Twain, The Abolitionist”

“Let us abolish policemen who carry revolvers and clubs,” Mark Twain said, no doubt relishing a pregnant pause, before adding, “and put in a squad of poets armed to the teeth with poems on spring and love.” Twain was, ostensibly, toasting Republican Governor of New York, Benjamin Odell, who in the first year of his first term has succeeded in pressing through a controversial bill which reorganized the command of municipal police forces and, according to its critics, was designed to facilitate increased voter suppression in urban neighborhoods that were Democratic strongholds. Looking out from the dais across the ballroom of the Lotus Club, Twain would have seen nothing but the faces of New York’s Republican establishment. In attendance were congressmen, wealthy donors, and the recently inaugurated Vice President, Theodore Roosevelt, who had first imagined the bill when he presided over the NYC Board of Police Commissioners.

Whoever invited Twain, the most sought-after toastmaster of the day, had not done their research. In truth, there was likely nobody in the room, save Twain himself, who could remember what Twain had written 34 years earlier, on the day he was released from an NYPD holding cell: “I am glad I got into the Station House, because it will teach me to never so far forget all moral principle as to compliment a police force again.”

My paper will focus on how Twain learned his deep distrust of the emergent American myth which characterized police as personifications of justice and peace, in spite of their monopoly on violence. In the earliest stages of his celebrity, he led a reform movement against the violent, vigilante SFPD, who had staged a bloody coup d’état over the duly-elected municipal government. This oft-overlooked event in Twain’s career reveals much about the origins of U.S. police forces, the racialization of policing, and the crucial role of “media witnessing,” as Alissa Richardson theorizes it in *Bearing Witness While Black* (Oxford UP, 2021).



*In March of 1901, coverage of Twain’s “Poets as Policemen” speech appeared in newspapers across the country*

**Matt Seybold** is Associate Professor of American Literature & Mark Twain Studies at Elmira College, as well as resident scholar at the Center For Mark Twain Studies, editor of [MarkTwainStudies.org](http://MarkTwainStudies.org), and producer of *The American Vandal Podcast*. He is co-editor of *The Routledge Companion to Literature & Economics* (2018) and a 2019 special issue of *American Literary History* on “Literary Studies & Economics in The New Gilded Age.” Other recent publications can be found in *Aeon*, *American Literary Realism*, *American Studies*, *Leviathan*, *Los Angeles Review of Books*, *Mark Twain Annual*, *The Cambridge Companion to Literature & Economics*, and *The John Hopkins Guide To Critical & Cultural Theory*.

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“Exploring Anti-Carceral Education: Towards Mapping and Historicizing Contemporary Educators’ Theory and Praxis in Abolitionist Terms”

In the words of Savannah Shange (2019), schools have long been both “sites and strategies,” for anti-carceral resistance in the Black community. While there has been a contemporary explosion in the application of abolition-thinking to the field of education, there has been a immense lack of documentation of the histories of abolitionist educators. This presentation seeks to rectify this lack of documentation by contributing to the historical archive written accounts of how teachers today who identify as abolitionist educators understand: 1) the theory, practice, and radical pedagogies of abolitionist education, and 2) how said contemporary practices are situated in the historical continuum of 19th and 20th century abolitionist educators in the United States. Invoking tenets of community-based research, presenters are partnering with a collective of abolitionist-oriented educators from a Northeastern urban city to place their practices and theories within the *long-durée* of abolitionism. Embracing antidisciplinary methods (Meiners 2007), the presenters will draw upon both historiographical (e.g., archival, (auto)biographical, and oral history) and sociological methods (e.g., in-depth interviews, focus groups, and discourse analysis) to contextualize the work of current abolitionist teachers in education within the larger legacy of abolitionist pedagogy. In other words, we will employ that historicization to explore to what extent today’s theory and practice of abolitionist education aligns with the dreams of our ancestors.



Image originally from George Bourne's  
*Slavery Illustrated in its Effects on Women and*  
Domestic Society (1837)

**Kia Turner**, from San Diego, California, is pursuing a PhD in race, inequality, and language in education at Stanford Graduate School of Education. She graduated cum laude from Harvard University with a degree in history and literature in 2016, and from the Harvard Graduate School of Education in 2017 as a member of the founding cohort for the Harvard Teacher Fellows Program. She is also pursuing her JD at Yale Law School. She hopes to use abolitionist theory to explore how the understanding and practice of community informs Black and Brown students’ experiences of punishment and justice in schools. Kia taught middle school English in Harlem for five years where she instituted a culturally relevant “Tools for Liberation” advisory curriculum. Kia received Teaching Tolerance’s Award for Excellence in Teaching, the National Council of English Teacher’s Early Career Educator of Color Leadership Award, and is a Knight-Hennessy Scholar.

**Darion Wallace**, from Inglewood, California, is pursuing a PhD in Race, Inequality, and Language in Education and Education Data Science at the Stanford Graduate School of Education. He earned a bachelor's degree in Rhetoric and African American Studies from the University of California, Berkeley, and a master's degree in International Education Policy Analysis from Stanford University. As a transdisciplinary Black education scholar, Darion employs mixed methods to explore how the sociolegal conditions of schools have structured Black education and outcomes across time. Moreover, Darion aspires to investigate how the organizational features of primary and secondary schools serve as a socializing agent to shape and inform black students' racial and political identities. Previously, he has worked as a research and policy associate at the Learning Policy Institute, where he supported the Educator Preparation Laboratory by centering equity, deeper learning, and the whole child framework. He lectures at San Francisco State University within the Africana Studies department. Darion is a recipient of the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship, Public Policy and International Affairs Fellowship, the Knight-Hennessy Scholars Fellowship, and a Ford Foundation Pre-Doctoral Fellowship.

**Michelle Velasquez-Potts**, *University of California, Santa Cruz*  
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“Slow Death and Domestication of Indefinite Detention”

The detention camp at Guantánamo Bay Naval Station has been operative for twenty years now, where since 2002 prisoners have been force-fed as punishment for staging individual and collective hunger strikes in protest of indefinite detention. The oldest captive is in his 70s, but the grand majority are middle-aged now. The New York Times recently reported that with the ageing of those incarcerated the Pentagon is now in the early planning stages for “terrorism suspects” to grow old and die at Guantánamo Bay necessitating the building of a hospice wing at the detention camp. This paper asks, what does it mean to think hospice care in a torture facility? I draw from Lauren Berlant's theorizations of “slow death,” disability studies, and critical prison studies to explore how the military's medical-political power operations at Guantánamo Bay attempt to transform the exceptional space of detention into an ordinary domestic space.

In particular, I argue that the military is using the possibility of hospice as a curative, both medically and rhetorically, to disavow the effects of torture on the bodyminds of captives. Following my previous work on the use of force-feeding at the naval station as a medicalized mode of living death, hospice care is similarly a liminal space where the past harms of state torture no longer exist. By suggesting hospice as a curative, I mean to develop a more robust view of cure, one that understands cure as an ideology informed by carceral logics and practices that invests in medical experimentation. To this end, I consider how abolition offers a critical way to reframe the potentialities of what freedom and life might mean at the detention camp and the material conditions that resulted in Guantánamo supposedly needing hospice to begin with.

**Michelle Velasquez-Potts** is an educator and writer working at the intersections of feminist and queer thought. She is a Chancellor's Postdoctoral Fellow in the History of Consciousness Department at UC Santa Cruz. Her first book project, *Suspended Animation*, focuses on the relationship between medicine and punishment, and in particular the rise of force-feeding post-9/11. She has published essays in *Women and Performance*, *Public Culture*, *Captive Genders: Trans Embodiment and the Prison Industrial Complex*, *Abolition Journal*, and *Art Journal Open*.

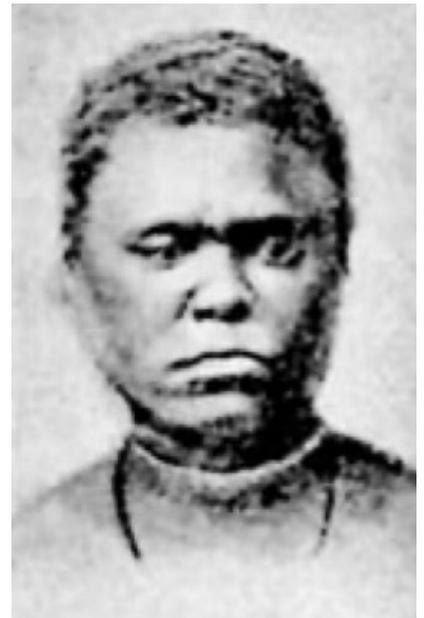


*Watch Tower at the Guantánamo Bay  
Naval Station*

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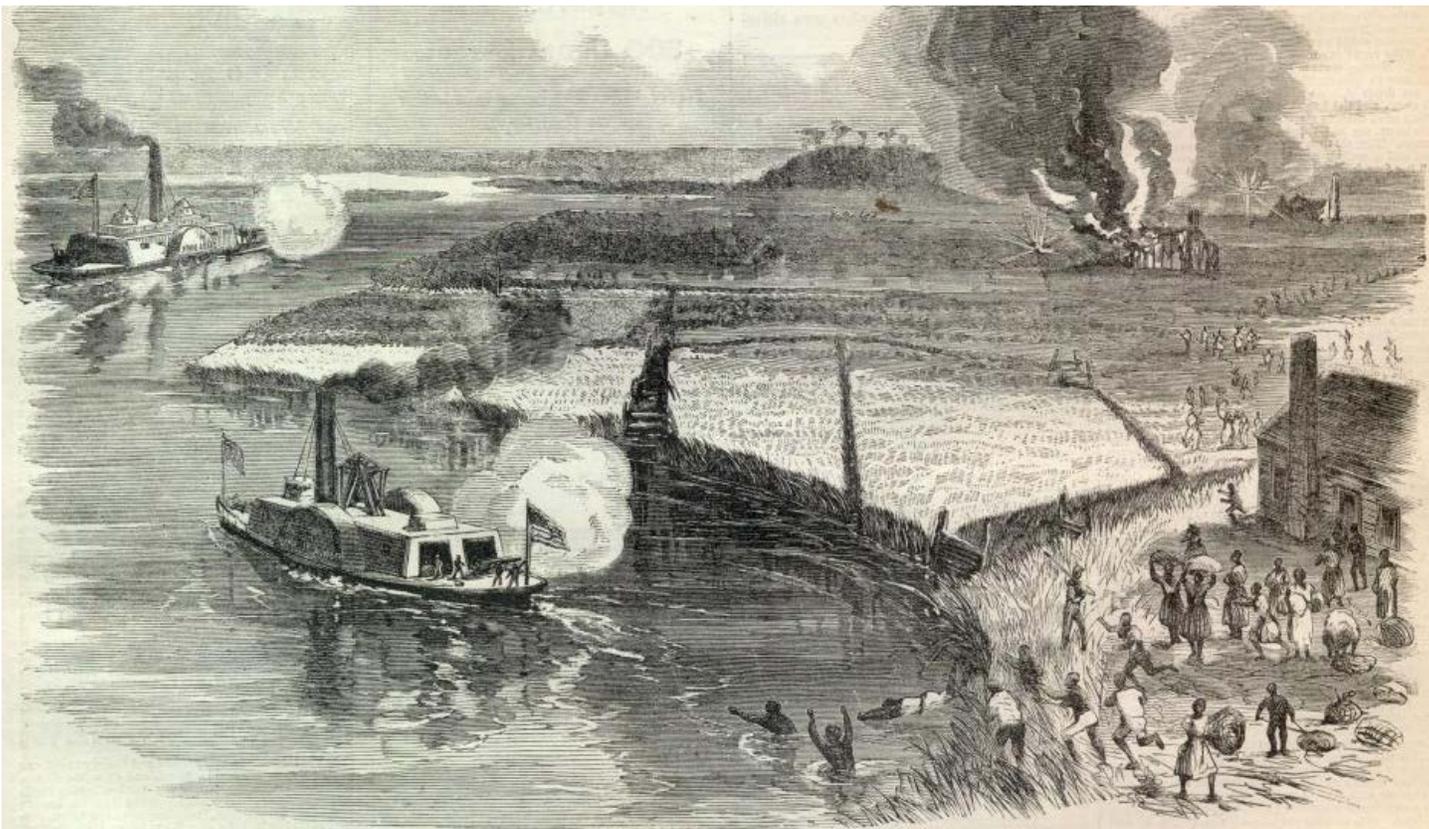
“*Criminalis Sequitur Ventrum*: Post-Slavery Discipline’s Biological Myths of Origin”

This paper uses *The Tragedy of Pudd’nhead Wilson* to surface the hidden cultural meanings through which the images of Hottentot women’s faces and labia that Cesare Lombroso includes in *La donna delinquente* accrue their explanatory potency. Despite that for Lombroso, the “father” of criminology, the coherence of Lombroso’s entire program of difference in his work depends on the putatively biological origin of the Hottentot’s criminal atavism, the chapter argues that it is actually that body’s cultural meanings that make his claim of innate difference believable. For one of the imag(in)ed women, for example, Lombroso makes no mention of her criminal offense; he only mentions her “maternal and sexual functions.” Proving the woman has a history of criminal behavior or even a genetic pathology to which her criminality is biologically traceable is apparently unnecessary. Lombroso only needs to make her legible as the culturally identifiable bearer of the black maternal figure’s pathological inheritance. In this way, *Pudd’nhead Wilson* exemplifies how the practice of culture helped perfect the black female body’s interpretive potential, such that it could appear as inherently pathological in the scientific text. When one of its characters commits a murder, fingerprint evidence from the crime scene is used to discover his identity. But in a stunning double revelation, the detective also discovers his blackness—his mother, enslaved by a white family, switched him with her mistress’s son at birth and, in so doing, sets into motion the series of events that culminate in the murder. The novel’s detective logics usefully merge the question of criminal discoverability with the question of racial identification, such that the bio-logic of *partus sequitur ventrum* is not required to assure blackness’s perpetual culpability. Strikingly, *Pudd’nhead Wilson* is a postbellum novel set in the antebellum period—it relies on its white reading public’s familiarity with and nostalgia for a way of life secured through the law and custom of slavery, and provides that public with assurance that science will furnish a permanent (ostensibly natural) interpretive frame for Black subjection through the same logic of heritability. And, just like in the former system, the new criminal status follows the status of the mother. Ultimately, the paper suggests that Lombroso and Ferrero’s proleptic vision more rationally coheres when contextualized in relation to the view of black female flesh that the novel, as a cultural text, helps enable.



“Negro Venus” from Cesare Lombroso’s *La donna delinquente* (Criminal Woman). Image taken from the Duke University Press translation(2004).

**Henry Washington, Jr.** is an Assistant Professor of Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Wesleyan University. He holds an MA in English and a PhD in Modern Thought and Literature, both from Stanford University. His first book project, tentatively titled “Enfleshing the Criminal: Producing and Policing Black (Sexual) Difference in the Criminological Imagination,” traces the cultural habits of seeing through which the black female body became legible as the paradigmatic arbiter of criminality’s pathological inheritance in the mid-19th century. It simultaneously considers the ways that Black fiction writers, investigative journalists, and visual artists from the period expressively experimented with (although not always departing from) the ostensibly objective terms on which racialized gender subsequently appeared in the logic of the law. His previous writing appears in *Women & Performance*.



*Illustration of the South Carolina Volunteers Raid on Combahee  
Originally published in Haper's Weekly, Vol.VII, no.340, p.429 (July 4, 1863)*



*Photograph of a demonstrator at a George Floyd protest holding a "Defund The Police" sign (June 5, 2020)*

# NOTES

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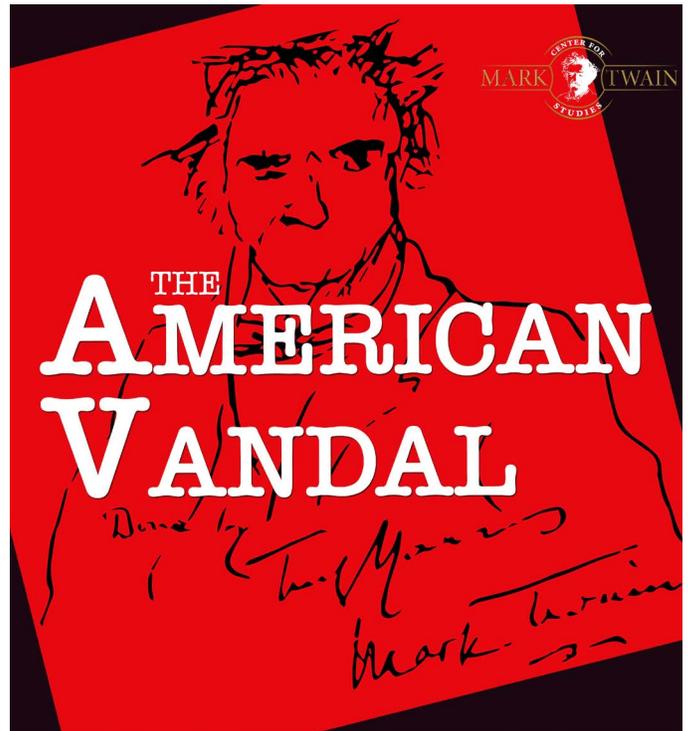
# CMTS OPPORTUNITIES FOR SCHOLARS

## *The American Vandal Podcast*

*The American Vandal* Podcast, launched in 2020, is an expression of CMTS's broadest definition of Twain Studies, as it crosses a wide range of critical fields and academic disciplines in which Twain is frequently little more than a footnote. Each season features a series of thematically-connected episodes, each featuring a conversation between scholars about not only their research priorities, but their political commitments, aesthetic tastes, and media habits.

You can find episodes on Apple, Spotify, Stitcher, Google, TuneIn, and ListenNotes, as well as listen directly from [MarkTwainStudies.org](http://MarkTwainStudies.org).

If you are interested in participating in *The American Vandal*, please contact Dr. Matt Seybold ([mseybold@elmira.edu](mailto:mseybold@elmira.edu)).



## **The Trouble Begins Lecture Series and MarkTwainStudies.org**

In 1985, The Center for Mark Twain Studies inaugurated "The Trouble Begins" lecture series. The title comes from a handbill advertising Mark Twain's October 2, 1866 lecture presented at Maquire's Academy of Music in San Francisco.

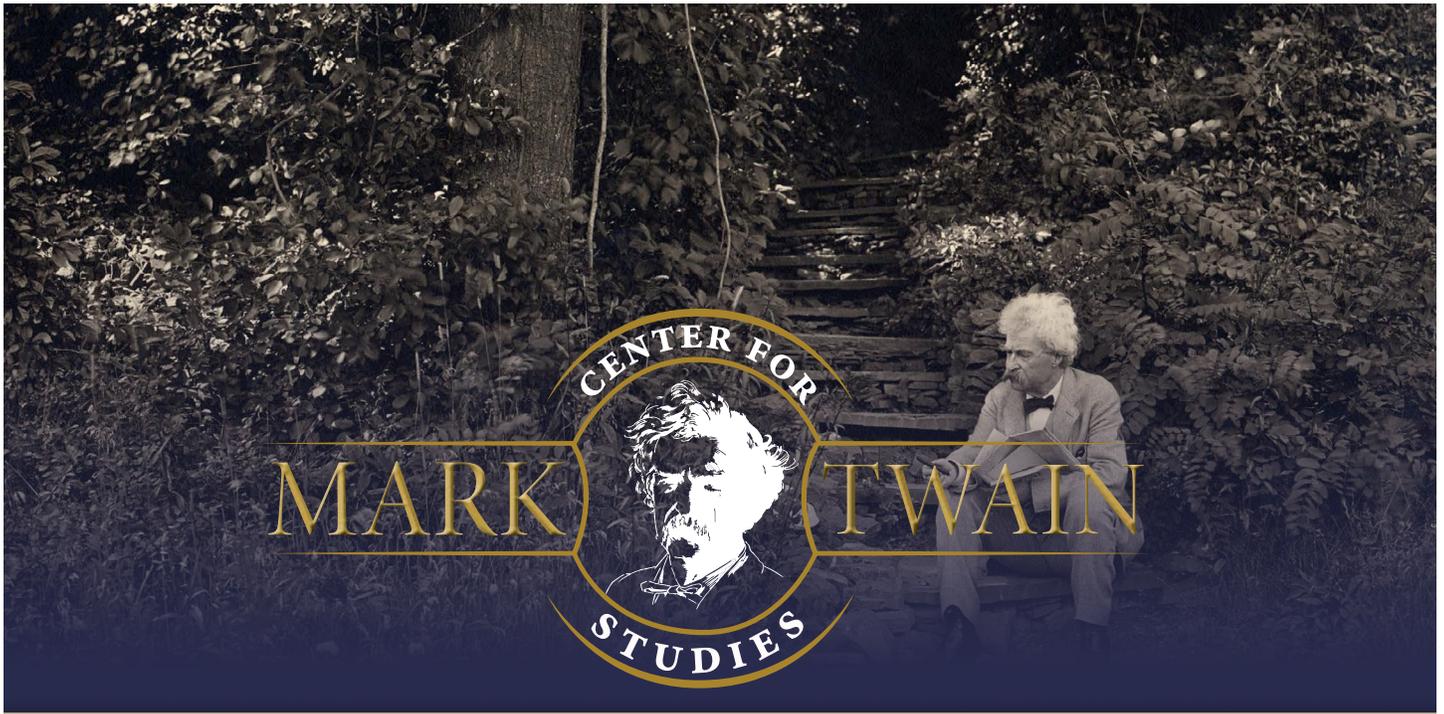
The lectures are now held in the Spring, Summer, and Fall of each year. All lectures are free, open to the public, and archived on [MarkTwainStudies.org](http://MarkTwainStudies.org).

Speakers in "The Trouble Begins" Lecture Series receive a sizeable speaking honorarium and a five-day stay at Quarry Farm. Lecturers will have the mainhouse entirely to themselves and their guests.

CMTS defines Mark Twain Studies in its broadest sense and is always looking for ways to expand its audience and perspective. Not only are scholars in the field of literature and history encouraged to participate, but applicants from any academic or creative field will be considered.

If you are interested in giving a lecture for CMTS, please contact Dr. Joseph Lemak ([jlemak@elmira.edu](mailto:jlemak@elmira.edu)).





# QUARRY FARM FELLOWSHIPS

## NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

Quarry Farm Fellowships are open to any scholar working in any field related to Mark Twain Studies at any career stage. This is a unique opportunity to work on academic or creative projects at Quarry Farm, Mark Twain's summer retreat where he penned *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and other iconic works.

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- At least one month-long and two two-week fellowships will be reserved for graduate students, contingent faculty, and faculty three or fewer years removed from completion of their Ph.D.
- At least one fellowship will be reserved for writers, artists, and architects working on creative projects



Applications are due November 30, 2022. Visit [MarkTwainStudies.org](http://MarkTwainStudies.org) for more information.



*Quarry Farm Porch Overlooking the Chemung River Valley*

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*Quarry Farm Preservation Associate*

**This event was made possible by the continued support of the *Mark Twain Foundation*.**

The program cover artwork was designed by Jan Kather, Professor of Media Studies at Elmira College

