

The Responsibilities and Difficulties of Writing about Race and Cruelty A Creative Panel

Kevin Dublin I “Misunderstanding White Knight Syndrome: Neighborhood Watch”

Christopher Pendergraft I “Sissy and the Half-Night Goblins”

Dillon Scalzo I “LOS ANGELES: Notes for a Fallacious Ethnography”

W.E.B Dubois wrote in *The Souls of Black Folks* (1903) that “the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color line,” referring specifically to race relations in a Post-Reconstruction Era U.S. He later expanded on this in the essay, “The Negro and the Warsaw Ghetto” (1952), writing that the real problem was “a matter of cultural patterns, perverted teaching and human hate and prejudice, which reached all sorts of people and caused endless evil to all men.”

The “color line” is still a source of academic and literary inquiry in the “Post-Racial America” debates of today which have created buzz words and topics such as “Post Patriarchal Depression Syndrome” (PPDS), “white privilege,” et al.

The panel will present excerpts from projects by three different writers who are addressing these issues in different forms and perspectives then begin a round table discussion on the responsibilities and difficulties of writing about race and cruelty:

First is an in-progress book-length poem titled *Misunderstanding White Knight Syndrome: Neighborhood Watch*, and it examines the contemporary and historical context of the Trayvon Martin Shooting.

Second is “Sissy and the Half-Night Goblins;” a re-telling of the 1958 “Kissing Case” of Monroe, North Carolina in the form of a fairy tale. It examines the interpersonal construction of prejudice in children.

Third is a performance poem titled “LOS ANGELES: Notes for a Fallacious Ethnography;” it explores personal “ethnographies,” the dangers of pseudo-intellectualism, and xenophobia— all set within L.A.

Our primary topics of discussion could include: setting goals or boundaries, using academic research for writing literature, the research that went into our actual projects, the responsibility of fairness or unfairness when writing about actual events, and how to approach cruelty with care.

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Kevin Dublin is an MFA graduate student at San Diego State University, a poet and part-time micro publisher. He has worked as a writing consultant, a first-year composition instructor, and an editorial assistant. He digs inspiring children, so he has also worked with Young Writers' Workshops at North Carolina State and Duke University. Kevin enjoys spending time filming video adaptations of poetry and reading about poetics. His own work has recently appeared in *Poetry Quarterly*, *Connotations Press: An Online Artifact*, and *Aries: A Journal of Art and Poetry*.

Born and raised in a southern town that was once a major hub in the American slave trade, **Christopher Pendergraft** has witnessed the effects of racial discrimination throughout his life. Fueled by the prospects of a future without hatred, he's now devoted his life to the study of the narrative as the prime catalyst for social change. As a fiction graduate of Southern New Hampshire University, he's currently working on *Portraits*, a collection of flash fiction that examines the relationship between society and the proliferation of ideas.

Dillon Scalzo is a poet, musician, conduit, brother, un ser humano, and above all a citizen of the cosmos. He is currently focused on the U.S./Mexico border environment of Southern California and how the wall between the two countries may be non-violently torn down. He dedicates his study to the mediums of both the English and the Spanish language. Raised in the Great Basin high desert and the Sierra Nevadas, his favorite human activity is walking. He is currently pursuing an MFA in Creative Writing at San Diego State University.