

**Annus, Irén (University of Szeged)**

***Change of Homeland, Change of Heart? Dynamisms in Contemporary American Expatriation***

Land/scape has been an essential constitutive factor of the concept of America since its inception in the European imagination. Conceived as the Promised Land, the place for the City upon the Hill (Winthrop), God's untouched handiwork (Cole), the Garden (Marx), and the Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave (Key), land, nature and geographical location have been integral to the political, cultural and social construction of both the nation and the country. While it has lured to its shores millions of people with the hope of a better life, some Americans have opted to leave the land of their birth behind in search of a new home and experiences somewhere else. In the last two centuries, well-known expatriate circles in Western European cultural cities have been formed, with renowned writers, artists, journalists and public figures among their members. In recent decades, however, an increasing number of regular Americans have chosen to reside outside of the borders of the US. Primarily drawing on findings from semi-structured interviews, this presentation investigates the reasons behind contemporary expatriation (both push and pull factors) and reveals the significance of the land/location in their identity construction in relation to their understanding of the concept of the home/land.

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**Aradi, Csenge (University of Szeged)**

***"The world is truly vast" – Representations of Nueva España in Shūsaku Endō's historical fiction The Samurai***

The study explores the image of Nueva España from a Japanese perspective in Shūsaku Endō's historical fiction 'The Samurai', which recounts the journey of a Franciscan priest and four Japanese envoys across the Pacific Ocean to the territories of today's Mexico in the early 1600s. While the novel is based on actual historical events and figures, it is a strongly fictionalized interpretation of this arduous journey, focusing on internal dialogues about faith and destiny. I will argue that the depictions of Nueva España and its people through the eyes of the protagonist Hasekura Rokuemon function as metaphors of his spiritual evolution. Nature metaphors are of central importance in the analysis as the images of changing landscape align with Hasekura's experiences and struggles to make sense of a culture and a religion that are fundamentally different from his. Expanding the scope of analysis from the inside world to outside spaces, the study also looks at the stereotypical depictions of the people the Japanese envoys encounter during their stay in various regions of Nueva España.

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