

Out of Many, One: Formal Hybridity in Literature and Cinema since the 1970s

“E Pluribus Unum,” the traditional motto of the United States, could also be applied to works which arrange a number of disparate parts into a single entity. With the arrival of Modernism, fragmentation became a frequent artistic strategy: texts such as T. S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land* emphasized their employment of multiple elements, some of which were appropriated from pre-existing texts, thus establishing the form of the literary collage. Postmodernism, with its radical rejection of any totalizing projects, brought about a number of works celebrating their discontinuous, random and disconnected structure. The new century has seen a return of fragmentary forms, which, unlike those from the 1960s and 70s, were not confined to an avant-garde niche but successfully entered the literary mainstream.

The aforementioned motto is equally relevant to postmodern cinema, which leans towards experimentation, self-reflexivity, re-evaluation of conventions, mixing genres and styles, rejection of chronology and shuffling perspectives.

The questions underpinning this panel revolve around the poetics and politics of works that do not constitute a linear and coherent whole. Besides examples of art forms such as collage, montage and the shuffle narrative, we are interested in more conventional works (including those with mass appeal) which challenge the expectation of narrative and formal unity. Among the issues that can be considered by our panelists are generic hybridity, the interplay between continuity and discontinuity in fragmented narratives (both literary and cinematic), the plurality of perspectives in contemporary fiction/film, the increasingly blurred distinctions between novels and collections of short stories, the acknowledged or unacknowledged appropriation of other sources and the mainstreamization of fragmentary practices in literature and cinema.

Convenors:

Wojciech Drąg, University of Wrocław – wojciech.drag@uwr.edu.pl

Tomasz Fisiak, University of Łódź – tomasz.fisiak@uni.lodz.pl

Marcin Tereszewski, University of Wrocław – marcin.tereszewski@uwr.edu.pl