

Bird Sonics

Panel organizers

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'Bird sonics' play an instrumental role in the American imagination. Unlike any other animal sounds, bird calls and bird 'songs' have prompted American writers and thinkers to correlate bird sounds and 'melodies' with the human voice, human experiences, and poetic creativity. Past and present criticism has primarily focused on the ways in which birds, their songs, and the responses to their singing serve as a source for a wide range of rhetorical devices in American poetry, including allegory, apostrophe, metaphor, personification, and symbol. In recent years, critics and authors have also examined the topic of birds through the lens of environmentalism to discuss the relationship between nature, birds, and biographical experiences and especially the link between the climate crisis and the steep decline of the diversity of avian species in the Anthropocene. Our panel of four speakers examines four aspects of 'Bird Sonics' that tend to be neglected in contemporary criticism and discourse.

Presentations

Contemporary Native American Bird Sonics

Philipp Schweighauser (Universität Basel)

Uncanny Augury: Audible Futures through Bird Sonics in American Literature

Burak Sezer (TU Dortmund)

Sidney Lanier's 'The Mockingbird' and Intersonic Mimicking

Erik Redling (Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg)

David Rothenberg: Collective Improvisation in Interspecies Music

Louisa Collenberg (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt)