

EAST *meets* **WEST**

Cross-Cultural Perspectives
on America's Changing Image

12-13 September 2025, Kosice, Slovakia

Book of Abstracts

INTRODUCTION

This booklet contains abstracts of papers which will be presented at the biennial Conference of the Czech and Slovak Association for American Studies entitled **East Meets West: Cross-Cultural Perspectives on America's Changing Image**. Taking place in Slovakia for the first time, the conference is held on 12–13 September 2025 and is organized by Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice in cooperation with the Czech and Slovak Association for American Studies.

The event focuses on how America's global image has transformed in recent years. Once central to narratives of liberty and opportunity, its image is now examined through a diverse range of literary, cultural, philosophical lenses, including perspectives from both within America and regions such as Central and Eastern Europe and Asia and beyond.

This interdisciplinary conference will explore these evolving perspectives and how they are reflected in literature, media, cultural narratives and food studies and it will feature contributions from literary scholars, historians, political and social scientists, and scholars of (popular) culture not only from the Czech Republic and Slovakia, but also from Austria, Japan, Hungary, Poland, Spain, and the United States.

The conference organizers are happy to welcome the following plenary speakers, whose lectures will address some of the key issues discussed at the conference:

- [Hua-Yu Sebastian Cherng, New York University, USA](#)
- [Stephen Wooten, University of Oregon, USA](#)
- [Michaela Weiss, Silesian University, Czech Republic](#)
- [Matej Cíbik](#), Central European University in Vienna, Austria and University of Pardubice, Czech Republic

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Dr. h. c. Prof. Mgr. Slávka Tomaščíková, PhD, Vice-Rector for International Affairs, Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice, Slovakia

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Košice, September 2025

the real murderer: “Thousands were watching, no one saw a thing / It happened so quickly, so quick, by surprise / Right there in front of everyone’s eyes / Greatest magic trick ever under the sun.” This theme of mass deception also resonates with the social engineering seen during the COVID-19 pandemic, when many artists endorsed the official narrative of the crisis. Without explicitly referencing COVID-19, Dylan subtly evokes its trauma, framing Kennedy’s death as the catalyst for a series of catastrophic events in American history—including the assassinations of Malcolm X, Martin Luther King Jr., and Robert F. Kennedy. However, among them, John F. Kennedy is seen as a Christ-like figure, sacrificed for the supposed good of America—a “sacrificial lamb [...] on the altar of the rising sun.” His death, according to Dylan, marked the beginning of the Age of the Antichrist, ushering in an era of perpetual war and manipulation. Ultimately, this presentation will question the official narrative of Kennedy’s assassination, revealing a perspective far more complex than the one traditionally accepted as Dylan’s intricate sequence of events and cultural references serves as a roadmap to the truth. Soon, with ongoing efforts to declassify documents related to Kennedy’s death, new revelations may emerge that enrich Dylan’s narrative or even validate what has long been dismissed as conspiracy theory.

Jiří Měsíc, is an Assistant professor and researcher in the Department of English and German Philology at the University of Granada. His main interest lies in the mystical branches of the Abrahamic religions (Christian mysticism, Kabbalah, Sufism) and their echoes in literature, popular music and culture. Among his most recent publications are the monograph Leonard Cohen, the Modern Troubadour (Palacký University, 2020); the critical editions of Alberto Manzano’s poetry, Mandle a citróny [Almonds and Lemons] (Protimluv, 2025), John Pass’s poetry, Větrná zvonkohra [Windchime] (Protimluv, 2020), Gertrude Stein’s selected work, Mluvit a naslouchat [To Speak and Listen] (Éditions Fra, 2019 & 2021), as well as several book chapters and academic articles addressing religious sources in popular music.

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Schemata, Archetypes, and Authority: Mapping a Political Figure in the American Press

Elina Paliichuk, Borys Grinchenko Kyiv Metropolitan University, Kyiv, Ukraine

This paper explores the linguistic and conceptual portrait of a political persona in the American press. It builds on a case study approach through the media framing of James Michael Johnson, an American lawyer and politician who has served as the fifty-sixth speaker of the United States House of Representatives since 2023. On the day the politician was elected, the American media burst into highlighting the Speaker’s worldview and career path, suggesting the social implications and the role of the iconic American dream on a domestic and global scale. This study aims to build a conceptual and linguistic

portrait of Mike Johnson as a political figure. The language data was taken from the corpus of 50 publications at *apnews.com*, *time.com*, *theguardian.com*, *politico.com*, and *vanityfair.com*, dated 2023. Specifically, quotes and direct speech were used for the analysis to avoid journalistic bias. The methods of Mark Johnson's image-schema conceptual theory and Jungian archetype theory were applied to identify the pillars of the Speaker's worldview and forecast its influence on global political communication. The results reveal the dominance of PATH image schema manifesting in the verbal means in *backward-forward* direction, thus representing the desire to restore and to resort to the American political legacy rather than the development and progress in the future, and *up-down* direction representing authority and morality; CONTAINMENT (*in-out*) manifesting the security rhetoric of defending the national borders against migrants; BLOCKAGE manifesting in the tendency to speak more problems and difficulties, or obstacles rather than opportunities, FORCE representing the concept of the strength of America as a world leader. The identified schemata evolve in speech built around *faith* and *religion*, *family*, *institution*, *economy*, *foreign affairs*, and *society*. The *father archetype* acts in M. Johnson's speech as an appeal to authority, power, and discipline when referring to the *God (Lord)*, biological father, the founders of the USA, and the then-presidential candidate, Donald Trump, a follower of whom he is. The findings open new horizons in studying cultural, historical, and political contexts within interdisciplinary linguistic studies and social sciences, deconstructing media images of political personas through linguistic tools. The conclusions imply rethinking the current approaches by making allowance for the schemata, concepts, and archetypes discovered when interpreting the messages in media, which can help establish conceptual prerequisites and develop linguistic measures in response to emerging challenges and political uncertainty framed in American and global media discourse. The results and inferences can be applied beyond linguistic dimensions to construct meaningful transatlantic political dialogues.

Elina Paliichuk, Ph.D., is an Adviser to the Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (since 2023) and Assistant Professor at Borys Grinchenko Kyiv Metropolitan University, Ukraine (since 2015), and holds an MA in Linguistics degree from the Kyiv National Linguistic University. She initiated studies on warning human trafficking victims with a focus on metaphor, storytelling, schemata, and sensory language in discourses and empirical methods. The researcher is implementing Changing Young Minds: Student Awareness of Human Trafficking under War Conditions at the French Research Center in Humanities and Social Sciences in Prague. She also worked on Ukrainian legislation to align with EU acquis standards as an Associate Translation Fellow at the EU-funded Project "Association4U" (2017-2019) and as a translation infrastructure national expert at the 3E4U EU-funded project within the GIZ / ICON Institute (2025).

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