

Ida Bahmann - Stories of Migration

*Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses, yearning to breathe free, the wretched
refuse of your teeming shore.*

Emma Lazarus – “The New Colossus”

The US possesses a unique culture of literature dealing with migration. Immigration, naturalization, asylum and national migration are constant topics in American literature. Old Classics such as *My Antonia* and new classics such as *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* describe protagonists trying to make a life in the “land of the free”. Many poets, novelists, playwrights and authors of short stories have found ways to relate and claim their cultural heritage or describe witnessing migration. Today’s right wing politicians push an idea of the US that is very different from the country reflected by the words inscribed on the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty.

We seek papers that offer new interpretations of written texts dealing with the topic of migration. This includes international and national migration. Here, we ask to focus on cultural and personal integration. Papers may address questions such as what other elements reflect the migration process, e.g. landscape? How are the challenges of migration and integration discussed?

200-300 word abstracts may be sent to: ida.bahmann@hotmail.de

Katharina Böhm:

The Female Body in Contemporary Media – Between Empowerment and Objectification

More than in any other eras before, women nowadays have considerable autonomy over their bodies, due to means such as cosmetics, or birth control. However, there is still an underlying, sometimes not so subtle judgement when women openly live out their sexuality as promiscuity is still frowned upon, and in cases of sexual assault on women, victim shaming is still common. While active female sexuality is often demonized, there is a trend of sexualization of the passive female body attributing it an object-like status, especially in visual media. In portrayals of female characters, a trope frequently used is the virgin vs. whore dichotomy which lauds chaste women and condemns sexually active women - however neither virgin nor whore is exempt from sexualization. This discrepancy raises questions of (sexual) agency, power imbalances and moral value judgements in a world where sex sells. This panel invites discussions about gender narratives prevalent in our society and how media portrayals influence our view on female bodies and vice versa. Who is meant to look and who is meant to be looked at? At what point do sex positivity and sexual empowerment turn to objectification, are these processes connected at all, what sets them into motion? What motivates the standards for the ideal female body and how are deviations punished?

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Please send proposals of 200-300 words to: kathi.boehm@web.de

Josh Elwer:

Heteroglossia and Dialogism in the Contemporary Novel

Mikhail Bakhtin defines heteroglossia in the novel as "the interplay among its social dialects, class dialects, professional jargons, languages of generations and age groups". Behind each voice in this polyphonic array is a subjective consciousness with its own ideology engaging a world full of other subjective consciousnesses. Typically, this arrangement of voices is nonhierarchical as each ideology must be considered on its own terms, and the differing perspectives are in a *dialogic* relationship, not dialectic. Such novels are also characterized as being divergent and open-ended without any resolution.

One perhaps does not need to look too far to see the relevance of Bakhtin's ideas in our contemporary world of connectivity, where we see an unprecedented platform for diverse voices and ideologies, not only being presented, but acknowledged and dealt with. Therefore, there appears to be a mimetic impetus for the novel to portray such polyphonies. By being utilized in a literary work, the technique can be subject to defamiliarization, leading to questions as to the novel's potentials for employing heteroglossia and dialogism. In what ways does literature portray this stratification and how do we interpret it?

Topics for the panel could include, but are not limited to, addressing these points ranging from textual to cultural contexts:

- what techniques do we find in the employment of the above concepts?
- what difficulties can arise in a dialogic novel?
- how do characters embedded in such a stratification handle themselves?
- how are minority voices and ideologies represented?
- how does dialogic content differ in historical and contemporary settings?

Please send proposal of 200-300 words to elwer@stud.uni-heidelberg.de

Ulrike Freitag:

From Tess of the D'Urbervilles to #Metoo – Depictions of “Fallen Women” in Anglophone Literatures from the Nineteenth Century to the Present

The fallen woman as a social and literary construct has been in existence for centuries. While during the nineteenth century, this tragic figure fighting for survival at the periphery of society has been largely ignored by the very community from which it was expelled, in literature the fallen woman oftentimes has been put in the spotlight of social discourse to highlight a woman's failure to subject herself to patriarchal social structures. Whether one considers *The Scarlet Letter*, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* or *Sister Carrie*, examples of shamed women by the hand of superior men are plentiful in societies and cultures all around the world. In the light of the unfolding events in recent months surrounding the abusive behaviour of powerful men towards women of every social standing, once again it has become clear that women's position in many societies is everything but equal to that of men.

Therefore, this panel seeks papers on feminist and gender studies analyzing women's positions and depictions in literature from the nineteenth century to the present. The literary works chosen do not need to be restricted to American and British literature but can also include English language literature from different cultural background, i.e. Caribbean and African literature, as a variety of different cultural representations offers a broader insight into women's standing in the world. Proposals may focus on the development of female literary characters during the course of the twentieth century, minority feminist literature in the USA or the emancipation of African feminist fiction.

Please send your proposals of 200-300 words to freitagulrike90@gmail.com

Franziska Friedl:

Technology in Utopian and Dystopian Fiction

Technology is bad.

People do not talk to each other anymore.

Google is spying on us.

We are playing god.

Technology is good.

People talk to more people than ever.

Knowledge is democratized.

We are making science fiction come true.

Not many things in modern culture are as heavily debated as the advancements of technology. And the answers always seem to contradict themselves. The internet is making us more isolated. The internet is making us less isolated. Our phones make us smarter. Our phones make us stupider. So is technology inherently good? Or bad?

This question is indeed an old one. Men used to worry about the effect the invention of the printing press would have on society. Centuries later, others were afraid of women riding the bicycle – surely, it was to endanger their health and their morals? A radio produces the uncanny noise of the space between worlds, watching tv effeminates men and riding a train might just kill us all. But how were these technological anxieties addressed by fiction?

Have writers transformed them into blooming utopias or looming dystopias? And if a future society turns out to be the worst case scenario – is technology to blame? Can we distinguish a technological dystopia from a dystopia that merely uses technology? These questions and many more shall be answered in this panel about the depiction of technology in utopian and dystopian fiction.

The possibilities for topics are endless – from rather obvious examples like *Black Mirror* or *The Circle* to maybe not such overt treatment of technology in *The 100* and *The Handmaid's Tale*. All forms of fiction are welcome – movies, books, tv-shows, computer games and everything in between.

Abstracts of 200-300 words may be sent to: franziska.friedl@web.de

Gautam, Tanya:

Women, War and Literature: Tracing the Journey from 1914 to 2018

*“In a trench you are sitting, while I am knitting
A hopeless sock that never gets done.”*

6 Rose Macaulay’s 1914 poem, ‘Many Sisters to Many Brothers’, expresses women’s envy of men’s freedom to go to war. A topic, considered naive for the longest time, is now being explored in more complex terms by historians, scholars and literary critics who approach war studies through a feminist lens. From being frustrated for not being allowed to actively participate in the war and being subject to the haunting atrocities inflicted upon them, to finally getting their rights to vote and take roles in the military, women have fought their way through to achieve the same roles, voices and freedom that come seemingly naturally and normally to men. Despite of all hardships, women’s testimonies and memories along with their crucial roles and struggles have gone unnoticed and unheard, by the majority, in all wars, from international to personal. Laura Sjoberg, in her book, ‘Gendering Global Conflict: Towards a Feminist Theory of War’, offers an argument that joins a chorus of other feminist security and international relations voices - namely that war cannot be understood without considering gender as a primary unit of analysis. Taking its inspiration from this argument, the panel seeks to engage in a discussion and conduct detailed analysis of the stories, testimonies and memories of war represented through literary narratives written on women, for women, by women and men. Participants are encouraged to write papers and help prove that gender is imperative to war studies and contribute in some capacity to the developing feminist theories of war and peace. The topics include but are not limited to:

- Women and War Memoirs
- War and victimization of women
- Memories of the Holocaust
- Contemporary War Literature by Women
- Feminism and Militarism
- War Poetry by Women
- Feminism and security
- War and its impact on feminist writing
- Feminist War, Literature and Criticism

Abstracts of 200-300 words may be sent to : gautam@stud.uni-heidelberg.de

Jonas Hock:

Radicalism, Revolution and Resistance

In the wake of the 2008 financial crisis ideas of radicalism and resistance to authority have seen a resurgence. Symptoms of this have been both left and right wing, ranging from Brexit and the election of Donald Trump to the increased popularity of socialist politicians, such as Bernie Sanders and Jeremy Corbyn on the left, and Nigel Farage on the right, as well social movements such as Occupy Wallstreet and Black Lives Matter. The effects have also been felt in fiction. Some works deal with historic radical movements that have since been embraced by the mainstream, such as Ava DuVernay's *Selma*, about the civil rights movement of the 1960s, others imagine radical versions of the present or near future such as Naomi Alderman's *The Power*. The popularity of dystopian YA-fiction, such as Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* can also be interpreted as a reaction to an environment of anti-government sentiment. Not all literature on revolutions is radical however, as illustrated by the success of liberal fictions about the American Revolution, such as Lin-Manuel Miranda's *Hamilton*.

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We seek papers that explore recent fictions of radicalism in various genres and answer questions such as: What is the relationship between historiography and fictions of radicalism? How have progressive social movements impacted the production of fiction? Is there a reactionary backlash against radical fictions?

Please send proposals of 200-300 words to the following address: jonashock@yahoo.de

Jonas Hock:

Required Reading

Until this year, 2018, the official theme that the readings for Abitur Students in Baden Württemberg fall under is “Challenges and Choices in an Insecure World”. The two works selected by the Regierungspräsidium are the novel *Half Broke Horses* by Jeanette Walls, and the film *Crash* by Paul Haggis. While *Crash* did win the Academy Award for best picture, it is generally regarded as one of the worst films to win this accolade. Ta-Nehisi Coates called it “the apotheosis of a kind of unthinking, incurious, nihilistic, multiculturalism”. However, as of 2019 the theme will instead be “The Ambiguity of Belonging” – with the assigned texts being Tom Franklin’s *Crooked Letter Crooked Letter* and Clint Eastwood’s *Gran Torino*.

This panel feels that the rather limited perspectives from which these works are produced, can not give students a comprehensive understanding of the cultural and social environments of the USA in the 21st century. It invites panels on other works of fiction, especially novels and films, that deal with the topics of “Challenges and Choices in an Insecure World” and “The Ambiguity of Belonging”, especially from a wider range of perspectives. The works should be suitable for high school students, with regards to their linguistic difficulty and content.

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Please send proposals of 200-300 words to: jonashock@yahoo.de

Ayşe Nur Nilüfer Kizilkulak und Marie-Louise Müller:

Evolutionary Linguistics: The Origin of Language

9 Geneticist Steve Jones says “when it comes to what makes [humans] unique, science can answer all questions except the interesting ones”. The field of linguistics is interested in exactly those questions that are highly enticing yet relatively difficult to answer. Questions posed within evolutionary linguistics are within this spectrum as well: Where did language come from? How did language faculty emerge in humans? Is language a unique ability of humans? If so, why? Christiansen and Kirby refer to these questions as “the hardest problem in science”. Around the mid-19th century, debates around these questions increased so dramatically that Société de Linguistique de Paris placed a ban on any further discussion about the origin of the language in 1866 due to the arcane nature of the answer. After a century long hiatus, there has been a resurgence on the interest towards the field thanks to recent developments and nowadays one can easily find a myriad of publications and conferences on the origin of language. The ban put out by Paris authorities may have lost its enforcement; however, the controversies on the origin of language persist to be the same. The submissions to this panel can revolve around – but are not limited to – the following interrogatives: Are we indeed unique in our ability to utilize language? If so, how does our language differ from animal communication systems? How and why did language faculty emerge in one particular species, humans, but not in other species? How do other areas such as language acquisition, historical linguistics, neuroscience, genetics, psycholinguistics, anthropology, computer modeling etc. help understand the origin of language? What theories are proposed with regard to the emergence of language? To what extent can studies of pidgins, creoles, language universals and grammaticalization further evolutionary linguistics? It is true that the panel may not be able to boast a conclusion to presumably the hardest question in science, yet the contributions as such can help disperse the mist which evolutionary linguistics has so long threaded under.

To take part in, please send your 250 – 300 word abstracts to aysenurnilufer@hotmail.com or lsemueller@aol.com

Burcu Kocyigit:

Humanitarian Literature: Politics, Memory, and the Narrative Imagination

Sartre's highly theoretical essay "What is Literature?", which engages with the difficult relationship between writing and political commitment, and Adorno's by now notorious, albeit often decontextualized, dictum "[t]o write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric" already pointed to a general mood of disillusionment among postwar Western intellectuals, to the changing (i.e. political) role of literature and to a rejection of the modernist *l'art pour l'art* creed. The rise of poststructuralism and postcolonial studies have further led a growing investment in alterity and otherness discourse, paving the way for popular human rights narratives, memoirs and movies portraying trauma and displacement as well as survival. Such narratives have presented a possibility of "understand[ing] our common humanity" (M. Nussbaum, *Cultivating Humanity*, 1997:143), at the heart of which lies the concept of vulnerability.

This panel explores the relationship between politics, memory and literature on the one hand and the representation of victims and victimization on the other, questioning how efforts of humanitarianism function to cater to the Western reader. Moreover, it examines the power of literature as an art form and debates the role of storytelling for reconciliation and bearing witness to the suffering of the invisible people.

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Müge Yerdenler and Iva Petrak:

Cognitive Metaphor and Metonymy in Political, Educational and Cultural Discourse

Metaphor and metonymy represent two key processes and concepts in cognitive linguistic research. According to the Conceptual Metaphor Theory, the dominant paradigm in the contemporary metaphor studies, metaphors are fundamentally conceptual and familiar linguistic metaphorical expressions are but surface manifestations of underlying conceptual relationships. Metaphor and metonymy are thus central to thought and therefore language. The way we conceptualize and talk about everyday phenomena may influence how we approach and process them. In this way the study of the use of metaphor in discourse can lead to a better understanding of human emotions, attitudes and conceptualizations, as individuals and as participants in social life. Given that metaphors play a central role in the construction of social reality, contemporary political, cultural and educational contexts are particularly fruitful sources for the investigation of metaphorical and metonymic processes. Focusing on this premise, this panel aims to bring insights into the contemporary study of metaphor in discourse and its implications on the course of perceiving, processing and interpreting social reality.

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We welcome papers studying metaphor and metonymy in the English language in different realms of use in society (political, educational, cultural, artistic). Contributors may approach metaphor and metonymy from a variety of perspectives and by applying a variety of methods (including discourse analytical methods, corpus-based methods, experimental methods, etc.). We call for papers that explore the challenges of the metaphor identification, interpretation and application within the theoretical framework of the Conceptual Metaphor Theory.

200-300 word abstracts may be sent to Iva Petrak (petrak@stud.uni-heidelberg.de) or Müge Yerdenler (mugeyerdenler@gmail.com).

Lena Pfeifer:

Getting Rid of the 'Post': (Literary) Theory After Post-Structuralism

12 Speaking the language of literary theory had, over several decades, closely resembled speaking the language of 'French Theory': Foucauldian power-networks, Deleuzian rhizomatic text structures, and Derridean decentredness are only few out of many examples. After the ardent reception of poststructuralist theory in Anglo-American academia in the course of the 1980s and early 90s, more contemporary publications summon an era 'after theory'¹ or 'post-theory'², poststructuralism being seen as the peak and the fatal turning point at once. At the same time, newly emerging movements have been postulating a more tangible theoretical framework: Cognitive Poetics make an empirical claim in borrowing from neuroscientific modelling, New Formalists have rediscovered the essentiality of form for aesthetic experience, and New Materialism re-evaluates the object as the starting point of thinking in the form of an object-oriented ontology.

It is this tension which confronts us with questions such as the following: What comes after post-structuralism? Can theory be dead? Does it need to react to the rapidly changing politics of the day? Or, does it need to get rid of its 'post'-ness and revert to a more hermetic structuralism or formalism?

This panel shall present and critically discuss recent developments in literary theory that can be seen as a reaction to and as an engagement with the movement of poststructuralism in the broader sense.

Please send proposals of 200-300 words to: lena.pfeifer@stud.uni-heidelberg.de

Krystian Piotrowski and Sebastian Straßburg:

Memory, Identity, Trauma: Literary and Cultural Conceptualisations of Remembrance

It is not always feasible to create an objectively truthful narrative based solely on reminiscences; being cognisant of all the ensuing difficulties that accompany the processes of memorisation, retention, and verbalisation of lived experience, one should always deem the factuality and veracity of given accounts oneself. Although, many a time, it proves to be a problematic endeavour – remembrance is socially biased and liable to change over time, as is one's identity. In this sense, the discussion on memory is also the discussion on the polyphony of numerous voices – on all the individuals and minority groups whose stories need to be heard, mutually worked through, and formally accounted for.

We welcome all (trans-)disciplinary contributions addressing the problematics of memory and trauma in literature, culture, and the public sphere. Suggested topics include but are not limited to:

· places of memory (statues, archives, institutions); · lieux and milieux de mémoire; · postmemory and posttrauma; · (trans)national discourses and meta-dialectics of memory; · narrativisation of personal, generational, collective, cultural memory; · recollection in life-writing: (auto)biographies, memoirs, journals; · non-memory: forgetfulness, amnesia, lapses of memory, dissociation; · objects of memory: memory idols, icons, heirlooms, memorabilia; · artēs memoriae, mnemotechnics, mnemonics; · rites of commemoration – memory in rituals and collective practices.

Paper proposals, consisting of a 250-word abstract and a brief biographical note (including institutional affiliation), should be sent to: k.piotrowski@stud.uni-heidelberg.de and s.strassburg@stud.uni-heidelberg.de.

Lisa Roden:

Discourse Markers, Hedges, Filler Words, and the like in English

Devices such as *as you know, well, I mean*, and *like* are commonly used to mark certain discourse functions in English. Some say discourse markers (DMs) often signal uncertainty, others argue they are used to indicate focus or important information. There is no consensus on what to call these linguistic devices (or on how they function), so to avoid confusion, in the following I will stick to the term discourse markers. (However, this panel should by no means be limited to what some linguists have defined as DMs).

A panel could discuss:

- DMs in different varieties of English
- (Historical) Pragmatics of DMs
- Functions of specific DMs
- Gender and DM usage
- EFL and the acquisition of DMs
- Comparing German and English DMs

Please send proposals of 200-300 words to: l.rodén@stud.uni-heidelberg.de

Lukas Schutzbach and Williams Buchheimer:

Conceptions of Masculinity in 20th and 21st Century American Literature

Masculinity is a major topic of the contemporary socio-cultural and socio-political discourses, often (mis-)placed as the direct antipode to the discussion of femininity and similar gender-political topics. We want to take a step back from these heated discussions and take on a sort of semi-phenomenological analysis of masculinity as a literary concept. The discussion of masculinity shall not be undertaken in order to form the antithesis to current political narratives.

Due to the sheer presence of distinctively manifold interpretations and presentations of masculinity in modern and contemporary writing, it simply seems to be a topic worth discussing on its own; in isolation, without deluding the discourse with overly moral and one-dimensional (politically motivated) agendaes that hinder a neutral examination of the matter and the recognition the phenomenon's diversity. Examples may range from more bold approaches such as Hemingway's coarse urge to prove virility and Bukowski's frail and embittered meditations, to more complex analyses such as David Foster Wallace's multi-reflexive meta-deconstruction of 'hideous' masculinity in Brief Interviews with Hideous Men.

Depictions of masculinity are not restricted to machismo and the display of virility and vigor. The literary representation of the conception bears for more interesting and elaborate approaches we deem to be equally important and theoretically/scholarly interesting.

In order to accomplish a more diversified and comprehensive analysis of the topic, we seek to explore the depth of the multitude of representations of masculinity, contrast different approaches methodologically and historically and deconstruct their genealogy, effect and reception.

The canon of authors we came up with, including Hemingway, Bukowski, Kerouac, Miller, Palahniuk, Updike, and Wallace, most definitely just barely scratches the surface of the phenomenon. Thus, in order to enlarge upon the topic, we would be especially interested in papers granting new approaches to and perspectives on the topic and either discussing and/or comparing one of the said or similar authors. 500-700 word abstracts and interesting suggestions for further research may be sent to schutzbach@stud.uni-heidelberg.de and rothvoss-buchheimer@stud.uni-heidelberg.de

Nina Voigt:

Monstrous Culture/A Culture of Monsters: Narrating Cultural Fears and Crisis through the Figure of the Other

Jeffrey Jerome Cohen sees the Monster as a figure that appears as a “embodiment of a certain cultural moment - a time, a feeling, a place” (5) incorporating everything that is met with fear, yet ultimately fascinates as well. As such, the portrayal of Monsters and the monstrous in contemporary Literature and media is able to give an insight into perceived crises and anxieties of modern culture. Understood as an anomaly, a cultural metaphor that points at deeper troubles, American culture is steeped in tales of the monstrous other. Whether we think of race, sexuality, crime or gender, things differing from accepted norms tend to be addressed with recourse to the figure of the monster and the logic of monstrosity. As such we need to address the Monsters in our midst in order to understand anxieties of today.

Topics addressed in this panel could include, but are not limited to:

- The literary figure of the monster, the zombie, the vampire, the alien, the cyborg, or the ghost, as cultural embodiments
- The forms of the (racialized, gendered, etc.) Other
- Discourses of anxieties and fascination of representations of monsters in media like series, films, TV, graphic novels, or video games.

Please send proposals of 200-300 words to: n.voigt@stud.uni-heidelberg.de