GRADUATE STUDENT CONFERENCE

ENGLISH SEMINAR

7TH AND 8TH JUNE, 2019

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS
Concept and Organisation:
M.A. Students of the English Studies Programme

Friday 7th June

14.00 – 14.45  Room 108  
Keynote: Consumer Society and the End of the World in M. T. Anderson's "Feed"  
[Annika Gonnermann]

15.00 – 18.00  Room 108  Room 110  
(coffee break c.a. 16.15)  
Food and Identity in Literature  
[Chair: Alkim Kutlu]  
Ecocriticism: Theory, Literature, Science and Environmentalism? Writing the Environmental Crisis  
[Chair: Philipp Leonhardt]

Saturday 8th June

9.00 – 9.45  Room 108  
Keynote ‘Casting My Thought into a Form’: Margaret Fuller on Writing Through Self-Doubt  
[Caitlin Smith]

10:00 – 11:30  Room 108  Room 110  
(coffee break c.a. 11.30)  
Ethics of Difference, Responsibility, and Literature  
[Chair: S.Can Emekli]  
Contemporary Language Change in Modern Englishes  
[Chairs: Robin Sadlier, Dana Serditova]
11.45 – 13.30  
Room 108  
The Genre Turn  
[Chair: Valentina López Liendo]  

Room 110  
Language Construction in the Mind: Formulaic Sequences and Conceptual Metaphors  
[Chairs: Zibu Lin, Jie Wang]  

14.15 – 16.00  
Room 108  

Coffee Break c.a. 16.00  

Room 110  
Representations of Gender and Values in Literature and Cinema  
[Chairs: Laura Herges, Rubiga Murugesapillai, Ruth Quante]  

Workshop: Turning Linguistic Theory into Fun Classroom Activities  
[Robin Sadlier]  

16.15-18:00  
Room 108  

Crossing Traditional Borders of Gender and Sexual Conduct  
[Chairs: Sarah Jaber, Ana Turtoi]  

18:00  
Room 108  

Final Discussion
FOOD AND IDENTITY IN LITERATURE

Chair: Alkim Kutlu

Food, Remembrance and Empowerment in Cookbooks

Alkim Kutlu

Cookbooks have often been regarded as instructional texts that have no literary value. However, through time, there have been many cookbooks that contain anecdotes, side narratives or remarks that reveal more of not only the author/cook’s own life, but also the community and overall cultural circumstances surrounding the production of that particular cookbook.

The literary value, or the potential, of cookbooks can be best seen with Alice B. Toklas’ *The Alice B. Toklas Cookbook* and with Maya Angelou’s *Hallelujah! The Welcome Table*. This talk will explore the elements in these works that may qualify them as literary works. These are: the stories that accompany the recipes; the autobiographical narrative that parallels the cookbook narrative; the ingredients, etiquette and recipes that show social stratifications and the historical conditions, as well as how the literary reputation of the authors are used to establish the cookbooks as *belles-lettres*, and not just a collection of recipes.

Through looking at these aspects, as well as some formal and stylistic choices of the books, the talk will consider that these texts might in fact use the cookbook genre intentionally to convey other ideas, certain historical and cultural circumstances, or simply as a means to tell their stories.

To Eat and Die in Los Santos: Social Criticism Through Food in *Grand Theft Auto*

Luis Friedrich

Burger, Tacos and Pizza. The US-American cuisine is defined by its richness and also by the cultural diversity the country is based on, but also by the dark and cruel history of colonialism and slavery. In recent years it has become a target of a variety of aspects of social criticism, as seen in the movie *Super Size Me*, which criticized the peaking numbers of obesity in the United States in the early two thousands.

But not only the film industry had its go on this topic. The video games industry has also come up with a socio-critical approach to American culture. One of the frontrunners of this genre is the video game series *Grand Theft Auto*, first published in 1997. Ever since then, the series has not refrained from depicting an over the top, controversial, but (often thought of as) brutally honest take on American society’s full racism, sexism and violence.
One omnipresent element of the series is food, firstly consumable in *GTA Vice City*, released in 2002. But can this element be placed in the socio-critical context of the video game series? And if so, how nuanced can it be in a universe full of car races, drugs and violence?

Answering these questions, this paper at first will look at the variety of restaurants within a selection of four games of the *GTA* series, mainly analyzing the so-called Americanization of multicultural cuisines, its historical background and the US-American society’s obsession with fast food. Then it will take a look at the social interaction and the form of consumption these games allow, especially concerning the socio-critical element of racist stereotypes before finally analyzing the effects and consequences of consumption within these games, mainly focusing on a potential critical approach to the American problem of obesity and the social phenomena that follow.

**ECOCRITICISM: THEORY, LITERATURE, SCIENCE AND ENVIRONMENTALISM? WRITING THE ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS**

Chair: Philipp Leonhardt

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“Who killed the world?” – Ecofeminism and Motherhood in *Mad Max: Fury Road*

**Franziska Friedl**

Ecofeminism arose from the fusion of the feminist and environmental movement in the 1970s and 1980s, criticizing the capitalist-patriarchal perspective on nature, technology, and power. Its philosophy is constituted of ecocriticism and feminism alike with the preservation of human and nonhuman life and the fostering of growth as its overarching goal. In this talk, I will examine how *Mad Max: Fury Road* fits into the concept of ecofeminism by juxtapositioning female-coded nature with male-coded war. Nominated for ten Academy Awards, *Mad Max: Fury Road* is widely considered to be the most successful film in the *Mad Max* Franchise and many critics have praised it as the best movie of 2015. While at first glance, an action blockbuster named after a male hero set in a desert wasteland might look like the polar opposite of ecofeminist storytelling, the film is actually a sharp critique of capitalism, the treatment of nature under patriarchal rule, and the glorification of war even on the brink of extinction. Informed by an ecofeminist school of thought, *Mad Max: Fury Road* presents the exploitation of women and nature as intrinsically linked – by saving the enslaved women, nature is revitalized. Repeatedly, women are associated with fertility, life, and the earth, while men that follow the tyrant Immortan Joe are defined by militarism, violence, and oppression. The film further depicts motherhood as the driving force of change. The expecting mother of the group, fittingly named Splendid, initiates the escape of the “breeders” and topples the oppressive regime of Immortan Joe as a result.
‘At the Speed of Trees’, Is There Still Time to ‘Bark up the Wrong One’? Talking (to) Trees in Richard Powers’ The Overstory and Its Reception

Philipp Leonhardt

Against the background of several contributions within the field’s critical discussion this paper initially sketches the trajectory of ecocriticism’s development as literary theory and criticism, particularly with a focus on basic terminological issues between the prominent categories such as nature, culture, ecology, environment, human/non-human and their practical implications (e.g. Bate 2000, Cohen 2004, Gifford 2008, Morton 2009, Fromm 2018). This allows for a closer investigation of Richard Powers’ award-winning The Overstory (2018), possibly seen in terms of genre as so-called ‘cli-fi’, or “climate change fiction”, as such centred on environmental issues, repercussions of climate change and ‘the Anthropocene’ in literary works (Trexler, Anthropocene Fictions 2015). Powers’ text is analysed with regard to how these concerns are discussed, portrayed and represented in the fictional world and its multi-level narrative, on the basis of which the novel’s reception is assessed in a selection of reviews, interviews, critical commentary and journalism. The presented outline of ecocriticism’s methodology and current theoretical position as interdisciplinary field is discussed in relation to an interpretation implied by The Overstory’s theoretical but also literary and stylistic force – as exemplified by some key characters. Secondly and possibly in contrast thereof, a discussion of the novel’s reviews, journalistic and reader-specific reactions, questions the extent to which the environmental, ecological but also literary and theoretical positions match or in fact deviate from both novel and ecocriticism in these intertextual contributions. Comparing and analysing this network of selected eco-critical discourse around the literary text will particularly emphasize and question how the literary text’s vast kaleidoscopic performance of interactions of “the profound ties between trees and people” (as put forth by one of Powers’ characters) is found in the threefold comparison between ecocriticism, The Overstory and its popular reception.

NARRATIVE SPACE AND ITS INHABITANTS ACROSS LITERATURE AND OTHER MEDIA

Chairs: Cristina-Ruxandra Burghelea, Silvia Schilling, Sherin Nikita D’Souza

Adolescent Confusion in the Forest of Twilight - Rosa Nowak

Rosa Nowak

Stephenie Meyer’s Twilight series has been scrutinized mainly with regards to whether or not it propagates outdated and restrictive gender roles (as most researchers argue) or offers spaces for empowerment (see for example Joseph Crawford, 2014). The importance that is so often placed on Bella Swan – the protagonist caught in a love triangle between a vampire and a werewolf – being
a good role model stems from the series being mainly directed at adolescent girls, who are still learning how to find their place in an increasingly complicated world. Instead of reading Bella as being either a good or bad role model, I argue that the emphasis lies on her being in a period of adolescent confusion, caught in the hormonal and emotional upheavals of puberty. Hence, Bella is to be seen less as a “finished” character, than a character in the progress of making her way through the complications of being a teenager. The central space where her questions, doubts and confusion about growing into adulthood are negotiated is the forest around Forks. It is here that Bella has decisive encounters with vampires and werewolves, and it is here where she withdraws when contemplating crucial decisions. The way in which the forest is described underlines the confusion Bella experiences, and thus in its spatial disorientation takes up her internal disorientation. Through the space of the forest, the Twilight books emphasize their status as young adult books – despite the large adult fanbase –, because it is here where young adulthood finds its external mirror.

Comparing Spaces in Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes Stories and the BBC Series Sherlock

Silvia Schilling

Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes stories have continued to fascinate generation after generation since their publication between 1887 and 1927. As a consequence, the stories have been adapted in manifold ways. A recent popular example is the BBC series Sherlock, which was created by Steven Moffat and Mark Gatiss. This adaptation transforms the Victorian detective Holmes into the modern detective Sherlock by removing him from his Victorian context and placing him in contemporary London. The modernization of the original stories is thus to a large extent achieved through changes in the narrative environment, which is why the topic of space is of high relevance in this context.

Interestingly, while Sherlock’s 221b Baker Street may contain smartphones and laptops it also displays “an aesthetic air of Victoriana”, as Elizabeth Evans calls it in her study concerning the adaptation. In the series, the apartment is also much more frequently invaded by criminals than in Doyle’s stories, which results in 221b no longer being experienced as the predominantly safe space of the original stories.

From Season 2 onwards, an additional space is introduced: the so-called “Mind Palace”, a mental space of Sherlock Holmes. The concept of the “Mind Palace” has its origins in Doyle’s stories – for example, the Victorian Holmes calls his mental capacities an “attic” filled with furniture – but this metaphor is expanded and fully realized in Sherlock, gaining importance as the privacy and safety of 221b Baker Street are increasingly compromised.

“Coming of Age” in Salinger's The Catcher in the Rye

Cristina-Ruxandra Burghelea

J. D. Salinger’s Catcher has by now secured a lasting fame among both academic and amateur readership due to its so-called “rebellious” protagonist and narrator, Holden Caulfield. His
defiant, judgmental and nonconformist attitude has become the subject of many critical studies, which have placed great emphasis on the context of the story and the relation between the adolescent hero and the world surrounding him. However, as is true for the most complex pieces of literature, the critical stage has yet to discover the full treasure which still hides beneath the soil from which the novel springs. It is there, at the basic level of the construction of the narrative, that more answers can be drawn so as to replenish the interpretation of Salinger’s work and also to question the existing comments. Therefore, the essential elements of a fictional text: space, time, and character, will be carefully analysed in this paper. The enterprise will show how all three components complete each other so as to reveal a most surprising aspect of the novel as a whole: that it is a narration about movement from one space to another (“coming”) and from one age to another. However, this motion is not a progressive one, or future-based, but rather one that is regressive, or past-oriented. In other words, it is a story told from “here”, the place where the act of narration is initiated, to “there” where the main action evolves, and where the protagonist is constantly looking back towards, both physically and metaphorically.

**Constructing Identity Versus the Other in The Kite Runner**

*Sherin Nikita D’Souza*

*The Kite Runner* by Khalid Hosseini describes in detail the metamorphosis of a deceptive and disloyal boy, *Amir*, into a remorseful man who atones for his actions in the latter half of his life. This journey his character undergoes however is not static one. He is in a constant struggle to formulate his own identity, much like the other characters in the text. Most of these characters identify themselves as different and separate from the ‘Other’ and become unified in terms of belonging to an ‘in-group’ as opposed to the outsiders. Alongside having developed clear stereotypes about the outsiders, their actions (towards groups other than their own) are fuelled by a certain hatred that is displayed only in a particular time and location.

**The Narrative of Union transcending National Space: Proposals for British Identity in the Jacobean Period 1603-1625**

*Kieran Sommer*

The union of the English and Scottish Crowns in 1603 connected two kingdoms which had been at war over centuries and revealed large cultural, political and economic differences between them. They remained separate entities politically until the Acts of Union of 1707, which can be considered to have established the United Kingdom we know today. James VI of Scotland and I of England, who declared himself King of Great Britain, and his advisors, proposed unifying policies for the two kingdoms and tried to promote narratives of union and common British identity across the boundaries of the imagined communities and quasi-national spaces of his kingdoms. These narratives were political or historiographical in nature and sought, among other things, to create cohesion, integration and identification with the propounded British political entity. This paper will examine the proposals made for this Anglo-Scottish union, its limitations and problematic aspects,
and how the proposals transcended national space and aided in constituting British identity, while at the same time considering the union’s historical circumstances and its place in the development of the United Kingdom or narratives of the latter. Conclusions will also be drawn as to how this can be connected to the difficulties facing the British union and its identity in modern times.

ETHICS OF DIFFERENCE, RESPONSIBILITY, AND LITERATURE

Chair: S. Can Emekli

Ethics of Difference, Literature, and Society

S. Can Emekli

Self-Other correlation has been subjected to a binary distinction generated in the traditional politics of identity. Inspiring the Ethical turn during the 1980s, Emmanuel Levinas develops a fresh understanding of Self and Other by grounding them the ethical living and being. The essence of his perspective is to liberate the other from the absolutisation of the Self, and to make the Self recognise the otherness of the others in order to have the sense of infinity/altery. Furthermore, he introduces the infinite ‘responsibility’ between the Self and Other, through which the ethical living and being are doable. Hence, ethical being is identified as ‘being-for-oneself’ through ‘being-for-the-other’. In 1990s, Alain Badiou, who calls Levinasian ethics ‘ethics of difference,’ applies this to his discussions on multiculturalism and the concept of evil. In the 2010s, Terry Eagleton re-evaluates Levinasian ethics in his discussions on ethics of difference and evil. Consequently, this cumulative philosophy, ethics of difference, promotes the end of absolutisation of self-perspectives and a new reign of co-existent other/s and infinite responsibility. Accordingly, during my speech I will explore how Levinasian ethics becomes a core element to understand the current politics. The discussion will include the tendentious accusations against Heidegger, a different perception of intertextuality – and postmodernism in general – and multicultural politics of contemporary governments. Moreover, human rights, ‘minorities perspective’ and abortion rights etc. will also be covered under the critical lens of Levinasian ethics.

Ethics of Dehumanisation: Two Levels of Otherness in Dystopian Fiction

Anna Becker

Dehumanisation is a commonly accepted major trait of dystopian scenarios. Starting with the ciphers by which individuals are referred to in Zamyatin’s We (1921), the devaluation of the Epsilons in Huxley’s Brave New World (1931), and up to the contempt for the proles’ lives in
Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), there is hardly any dystopian work that does not include the dehumanisation of individuals. The dehumanised are constructed via diverse strategies of othering, ranging from psychological strengthening of the in-group feeling to alleged or even induced genetic inferiority (including animalistic and mechanistic dehumanisation).

However paradoxical this may seem at first, I propose the thesis that even dehumanisation basically follows more or less fixed rules of ethics. Considering that Levinas sees ethical being as “being for the other”, the phenomenon of dehumanisation has to be interpreted as drastically limiting this group of “the other”. Obviously, only members of the in-group are regarded as “the other” for which one bears responsibility, leading to a second level of otherness: the de-humanised, which are obviously not included in “the other”. Thus, the mechanisms, so to say tacit “rules” of dehumanisation can be understood as a perversion of the traditional rules of ethics – in the maxim “being for the other”, “the other” becomes a limited and exclusive in-group that is put into stark contrast with the out-group, the dehumanised.

In my paper, I want to explore this paradox further, examining scenarios of dehumanisation as presented in dystopian fiction. I will employ a selection of dystopian works, including – apart from the novels named above – films such as *Blade Runner* (1982) and *The Matrix* (1999). Starting with the theoretical framework, a definition of dehumanisation – necessarily reflecting on what it means to be human – and its relation to ethics, I will go on to look at separate specific incidents of dehumanisation and to what extent they follow the rules of ethics. Ultimately, I want to find out whether the mechanisms of dehumanisation, in constructing differences between “the other” and the dehumanised, can really be subsumed under the heading “ethics”.

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**German-Turkish Rap in the Context of Transculturality**

**Ayse Irem Karabag**

Last year, rap music was announced to be the most popular music genre, overtaking rock, with a total consumption of 24.5% in the USA. However, rap music was not always recognized to be a part of the popular and mainstream culture. It was associated with being the voice of poor, marginalized, ethnically discriminated communities when the hip-hop movement first started in the United States. Hence German-Turkish youths, especially in spaces marked as “minority ghettos” such as Kreuzberg, have also expressed their creativity and their diasporic situation through the repetitive beats and fast rhymes of rap songs, to address the discrimination and injustice in Germany.

Thanks to its arabesque motifs, Eastern beats and English/German/Turkish mixed lyrics inserted in a African-American genre, German-Turkish rap is creating a medium of “third space” in Homi Bhabha’s terms (1994; 1997), which is not only Turkish or German but a juxtaposition of different cultural practices and elements. However, hybridity is a term that can also evoke an essentialist perception of culture that advocates for monolithic cultural identities that are fixed on territories (Caglar 1998). Thus, hybridity, starting out as a significant cultural term that cherishes differences and fluidity of identities, runs the risk of reinforcing the binary distinctions that keep the hierarchical boundaries between the centre and periphery, majority and minority. That is why I propose Pütz’s ‘strategic transculturalism’ as an important analytical tool in examining the
German-Turkish rap and hip-hop scene, because transculturality provides an additional lens that helps to understand the commonalities rather than differences between communities, allowing new forms of identity constructions and plural and fluid cultural embodiments (Pütz 2008). In this paper, I will explain transculturality as a practice in gender and cultural identity formation in German-Turkish rap by giving the example of Dr. Bitch Ray and several recent developments such as the #MeToo movement and Die Urbane.

CONTEMPORARY LANGUAGE CHANGE IN MODERN ENGLISHES

Chair: Robin Sadlier, Dana Serditova

The Effects of Digital Technology on Literacy

Robin Sadlier

The turn of the millennium saw the sudden widespread availability of digital technology, putting mobile phones and computers in the hands of all sections of society. The first generation of digital natives had been drip-fed limited quantities of digital technology, but the end of the 90s saw an explosion of cheaply available devices, perpetually connected to the wider world. Whilst this sudden connectivity and ubiquitous access to communication equipment seemed a positive step, there was also a broad violent reaction against what technology was seen to be doing to language.

In 2007, John Humphrys wrote the now-famous article "I h8 txt msgs: How texting is wrecking our language", decrying how text messages were destroying the English language. He did not pull any punches, either: abbreviations, the loss of hyphens, and emoticons were 'raping', 'pillaging', and 'savaging' the English language. This hyperbolic prescriptivism and vitriol was common to the time, with many commentators predicting the rise of a generation incapable of spelling or writing properly, communicating in some base pidgin-like dialect - a debased form of a once-great language. Two decades later and the generation born fully immersed in the digital world are fully grown and now raising a third generation of digital natives. Has this mass-degradation of language taken place? Are we all communicating in Emoticons and a chaotic mess of inconsistent phonetic spelling? This paper is a diachronic examination into the effects of digital technology on global literacy, to see if text messaging really has destroyed the English language.
Slang(usage)

Dana Serditova

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, slang is "a type of language consisting of words and phrases that are regarded as very informal, are more common in speech than writing, and are typically restricted to a particular context or group of people." Slang is used for self-expression. It is playful, inventive, witty, picturesque, brief, and concise; it can be secretive, rebellious. Slang is present in all cultures, even though it does appear in different forms and possess various traits. Even the etymology of this word is still an unsolved problem (there are three different theories: Romani, Scandinavian, and variations on the English words language, lingo, or the French langue (Green 2016, Libermann 2003, Partridge 1954)). Slang is universal and, consequently, it is an inexhaustible topic for discussion and research. How important is style for slang? Is there such thing as ‘dark lexis’? Can slang be considered a language (slanguage)? What is the difference between colloquialism and slang? The subtopic of the presentation is Australian food slang. We will examine a variety of words and phrases and try to classify and describe them. Regionalisms will also be explained (including the map of sausages) and comprehensible examples will be provided.

THE GENRE TURN

Chair: Valentina López Liendo

Reading the Great Unread? The Genre Turn in the Digital Humanities

Max Rhiem

Since the publication of “The Slaughterhouse of Literature”, Franco Moretti has heralded the Digital Humanities as an opportunity to bridge the gap between canonized literary texts and “the great unread”. In Graphs, Maps, Trees, he further challenges the institutionalized exclusionary practice of close reading select ‘extraordinary’ texts while omitting the plethora of texts published alongside the ‘canon’. Even opponents of computational approaches, like Nan Z. Da, concede that distant reading “offers new ways to catch inequalities and ‘read’ corpora left out by the canon for reasons of access or judgments of aesthetics and value.” Similar questions have been raised by established literary authors’ recent turns towards genre fiction. In this regard, Moretti’s manifesto might not yet be able to tell us more about the recent turns of event, but it allows us to shine a light on the historical crosspollination between the literary and the popular. Thus, it enables us to further question the shifting understandings of “literary” versus “genre” texts and
puts the presumed novelty of a (post)postmodern turn towards the popular into historical perspective. Yet, such an approach raises new problems. Little attention has been given to distant reading’s infatuation with genre conventions. As inclusive as distant reading strives to be, it still relies on stratified assumptions of genericity as the basis of its underlying models. This paper thus argues that while distant reading challenges the distinction between supposedly exceptional canonized literature and neglected generic fiction, it simultaneously solidifies formalist notions of genre that are increasingly called into question. Therefore, this paper examines the notions of genre inherent in distant reading models and questions whether the aforementioned inclusive practices outweigh the costs of genre stratification. Which tools can the digital humanities offer to reconceptualize models of genre destabilized by the (re)new(ed) turn to genre in literary works?

The Relationship of Entertainment and Quality in Contemporary Narratives: A Comparison of the ‘Rise of Quality TV’ and the ‘Turn to Genre’

Sebastian Straßburg

This paper aims to contrast the in literary studies much-discussed ‘Turn to Genre’ to a trend in television series that is known as ‘The Rise of Quality TV.’ The products of both these trends challenge pre-conceived notions of genre, as well as the relationship between entertainment value and (literary) quality. In her 2016 publication *Quality-TV als Unterhaltungsphänomen*, Daniela Schlütz gives an insightful analysis of the development of serial storytelling in television and the emergence of ‘Quality TV’ as well as possible criteria for the evaluation of said quality. For her, entertainment and quality are not opposite poles on the same spectrum but two distinct axes on a matrix, in which ‘Quality TV’ inhabits the field ranking high in both entertainment value and quality. Schlütz analyses quality on three different levels: production, product, and reception, i.e. the craftsmanship involved in the production; immanent markers of quality such as narrative complexity, ambiguity, authenticity, multidimensionality, aesthetics and signature style; and the popularity of the show. Examples for such ‘Quality TV’-series are *Breaking Bad* or *The Wire*. The paper will have three parts: first, Schlütz’s framework and criteria will be presented; secondly they will be illustrated by examples from and applied to the popular show *Game of Thrones*; finally, questions as to the difference and similarity to developments and evaluative criteria in literature will be raised.
Colson Whitehead’s Zone One as a “Literary Zombie Novel”

Valentino López Liendo

Colson Whitehead’s novel Zone One (2011) was both received and marketed as a “literary zombie novel”. In his review for The Guardian, Patrick Ness describes its publication as “a surprising move,” considering that Whitehead is “a … writer of impeccable credentials.” Zone One’s status as a literary zombie novel thus highlights the tensions inherent in a renowned author – Whitehead was a McArthur fellow and a Pulitzer Prize finalist at the time – drawing from elements firmly situated within popular culture. These tensions become palpable not only in the novel’s reception but also in Whitehead’s own descriptions of the novel and the literary strategies he pursues within the text itself. After providing an overview of critics’ reviews across different media outlets and spheres, I aim to examine their evaluations of the novel before turning to Whitehead’s discussions of the novel as part of his wider literary project. While Whitehead emphasizes his love for genre, referencing zombie film classics as his inspiration, he also highlights the craft and originality of his work. Lastly, I will turn to the novel itself and analyze how Whitehead uses modernist techniques such as introspection and a complex narrative structure to imbue the text with literary value, building my work on to Tim Gauthier’s, Heather Hick’s, and Andrew Hoberek’s analyses of Zone One.

LANGUAGE CONSTRUCTION IN THE MIND: FORMULAIC SEQUENCES AND CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS

Chairs: Zibu Lin, Jie Wang

The Role of Formulaic Sequences in the Acquisition of Grammar: Has It Gone to Seed?

Jie Wang

The present paper examines the role of formulaic sequences as types of constructions in grammar acquisition and language development in general, i.e. whether formulaic sequences seed grammar acquisition or not. It provides a critical review of the conflicting opinions regarding the topic from the two major camps of grammar development: the usage-based account and the generativist one. The cycles of debate investigated center around: 1) language processing; 2) the issue of definition; 3) the unit of grammar acquisition. In a nutshell, the criticism of the usage-based account does rest on its fundamental weaknesses but fails to override it as a result of a less convincing argument and a lack of evidence.
A Comparative Study of Spatial Metaphors between Native and Non-native English Speakers – particles ‘in’ and ‘on’ as example

Zibu Lin

Particles (e.g. up, down, in, out, on, off etc.) in phrasal verbs comprise an important group of words that denotes spatial relationship in English. They have been testified to be highly polysemous and their meanings are found to display semantic patterns which are cognitively motivated. This motivation as accounted for by Conceptual Metaphor Theory is triggered by the systematic mappings of image-schemas inherent in the spatial terms onto abstract experience. In the context of second language acquisition, phrasal verbs often appear to be an obstacle for learners. This paper asks the question of how native speakers differ from non-native speakers in using phrasal verbs specifically in terms of frequency and types (i.e. spatial and non-spatial senses). Phrasal verbs that contain the particles of ‘in’ and ‘on’ are chosen to study this question and their usages in the International Corpus of Learner English (Chinese and German) and the Corpus of Contemporary American English are investigated and compared. The results and analysis yield a further question: to what extent the differences in usage can be ascribed to learners’ (un)awareness of the underlying conceptual metaphors.

REPRESENTATIONS OF GENDER AND VALUES IN LITERATURE AND CINEMA

Chairs: Laura Herges, Rubiga Murugesapillai, Ruth Quante

The new Mary Sue – the Construction and Deconstruction of the Manic Pixie Dream Girl Stereotype in the Movies Elizabethtown (2005) and (500) Days of Summer (2009)

Laura Herges

Over the last few decades, there have been countless examples of authors and directors constructing their female lead- and supporting characters as a so-called “Mary Sue”: “an idealized and seemingly perfect fictional character”, who is often “recognized as an author insert or wish fulfillment” and criticised as being “too perfect” and lacking in realism – so much that it appears one-dimensional and ridiculous (“Mary Sue”: Wikipedia).

A contemporary sub-form of the Mary Sue character is the “Manic Pixie Dream Girl”, a static character who has eccentric personality quirks and is “unabashedly girlish”. Manic Pixie Dream Girls have no “discernible inner life”: they “invariably serve as the romantic interest for a (most often brooding or depressed) male protagonist.” They are said to help their men to embrace life without pursuing their own happiness, and they never grow up; thus, their men never grow up either (“Manic Pixie Dream Girl”: Wikipedia).
This paper will analyse the depiction of the Manic Pixie Dream Girl in two different movies: *Elizabethtown* (2005), whose review written by film critic Nathan Rabin coined the term Manic Pixie Dream Girl, and *(500) Days of Summer* (2009), a film which tries to deconstruct the stereotype. The paper will discuss the different ways in which the Manic Pixie Dream Girl is represented in both movies and how far these portrayals correspond to the stereotype.

Furthermore, the mechanisms with which *(500) Days of Summer* tries to criticise and overcome the stereotype will be analysed, as well as in how far it succeeds in conveying its critical message to its audience.

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**Representation of Women of Color in Marvel's *Black Panther* (2018) – A Postcolonialist Reading**

**Rubiga Murugesapillai**

Marvel's *Black Panther* (2018) was not only a huge success in commercial terms, grossing a total of more than 1 billion US dollars worldwide, but it also reformed the ways in which the African continent was perceived and portrayed in media. Set in the fictional African state of Wakanda, it portrays a highly developed, civilized and resourceful community with highly qualified and trained men and women. It has tried to revert the image of Africa as a poor and undeveloped continent which has existed since pre-colonial times. Furthermore, it challenges gender hierarchies and the role of women in a postcolonial discourse and context. The women of Wakanda are warriors, scientists, and policy advisors as well as sisters, daughters and mothers. Although the hero of the movie, King T’Challa, remains male, it is only with the help of the women of his community that he can defeat his enemies and protect Wakanda and its resources. The movie commercialized and can be categorized in line with what has been called Afroturism, “a movement in literature, music, art, etc., featuring futuristic or science fiction themes which incorporate elements of black history and culture” ([Oxford Dictionaries](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com)). This new approach creatively imagines past, present and future of the African communities and societies and their powers and strengths.

This paper will use a postcolonialist approach in order to analyze the ways in which the women of Wakanda are portrayed in the movie *Black Panther* (2018). The gender hierarchies and relations will be explored in detail, as well as how far these constellations illustrate an emancipated approach to negotiating gender in a postcolonial setting. To refer to Gayatri Spivak and her influential work, can the subaltern finally speak? Or is this only one of the first milestones on a still long and rocky path to full emancipation? On a more theoretical level, this paper seeks to address methodological problems of if and how the location of Wakanda can still be considered a postcolonial space and if not, what are alternate ways of describing the colonial past and repercussions up to the present day? On an ending note, this paper also explores the need for the film industry and contemporary media to portray even more diversified and “niche”
subjects and communities and move away further from Eurocentric and Western representations of gender, culture and society.

Values and Gender-determined Expectations: An Exploration of Marital Problems over the Centuries

Ruth Quante

The psychologists Tammy Rubel and Shalom Schwartz from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem stated in a recent study that “men attribute consistently more importance than women do to power, stimulation, hedonism, achievement, and self-direction values; the reverse is true for benevolence and universalism values [...]” (Schwartz and Rubel 1010). When thinking of our everyday life and the sexual stereotyping one is confronted with, this is not a great surprise. But these values and their relationship of dependency with gender have fuelled certain gender-based expectations, which have accompanied and strained spouses over centuries. Famous examples of marriages struggling under gender expectations are the one of Sir Robert and Lady Chiltern in Oscar Wilde’s drama An Ideal Husband or the Casaubon’s in George Eliot’s Middlemarch. Especially the late nineteenth century with its rising New Woman’s movement, which spawned a great amount of female writings and new perspectives on values and expectations, is an interesting era to look at. For the first time, marriage was considered critically and openly discussed. In 1888, when The Telegraph asked its readers “Is Marriage a Failure?”, 127,000 dedicated readers responded (Kelsey 2013).

The same question is still asked today, as the divorce rates are constantly rising. Marriage has remained a divisive concept often discussed in contemporary works, such as in novels by Zadie Smith, as restrictions due to values and gender-based expectations are still represented and experienced today. While politics and society are changing quickly, values seem to be more steadfast. Hence, it makes sense to reflect on the emerging discrepancies, look back and reappraise.
CROSSING TRADITIONAL BORDERS OF GENDER AND SEXUAL CONDUCT

Chairs: Sarah Jaber, Ana Turtoi

Standing in-between Gender Expectations: The Dog-Woman, her Son, and Their Parallel Counterparts in Jeanette Winterson's Sexing the Cherry

Sarah Jaber

While the binary gender system is deeply interwoven with our society, the movements following Second-Wave-Feminism are breaking this system of rules and expectations. Simone de Beauvoir claims in her theoretical work The Second Sex that gender is a social construct and not defined by biology. Later Judith Butler confirms this in her work Gender Trouble and proposes that gender is moreover a performance and consists of social acts. Following these theories, this paper will argue that Jeanette Winterson's novel Sexing the Cherry explores and deconstructs the fixed binary gender system. It will show that neither of the main characters can be considered as merely male or female and that their characterisation and behaviour point towards a fluid gender identity, which stands in stark contrast to the fixed social representations of gender. This paper will also examine how gender criticism is present in the title and the narrative structure of the novel as well. With this, Jeanette Winterson confirms the theory of gender as a social construct and at the same time points towards a way to overcome the fixed binary structure of society.

Reading Carter through Kristeva: Abject Representations of Masculinity and Femininity in Carter's Rewritings of “Beauty and the Beast” in The Bloody Chamber

Yeşim Kaya

Beaumont’s “Beauty and the Beast” is taken by such critics as Any Crunelle-Vangrigh and Christina Bacchilega as a tale that puts masculinity in a superior position to femininity. Owing to such claims that the tale has a male dominated gendered discourse, postmodern feminist authors started to rewrite it by applying postmodern parodic modes of installing and ironizing to subvert its binary mechanism. One of these writers, Carter, included her iterations of “Beauty and the Beast”, which are namely “The Courtship of Mr. Lyon” and “The Tiger’s Bride”, in The Bloody Chamber. In those stories, in addition to using postmodern methods, she utilizes abjection as a means to deconstruct the hierarchal boundary between masculinity and femininity in the tale. The characterizations of Beauty and the Beast in particular provide the reader with ample evidence concerning how she does so. Moreover, the abjection in those figures’ character and appearance indicates that Carter’s use of abjection liberates her characters from the restrictions of the gender roles created within the patriarchal framework. The present study, therefore, first introduces Julia
Kristeva’s theory of abjection. Then to ground the argument that Carter’s use of abjection not only deconstructs the hierarchal relationship between masculinity and femininity in the original tale but also liberates her main female and male characters from the restrictions of gender roles with textual facticity, it analyzes Carter’s rewritings through this lens.

The Ambiguity of Sexual Conduct

Ana Turtoi

Seduction inevitably implies a certain level of manipulation and persuading. When we are pursuing, we are asserting ourselves. But rules of sexual conduct, if in fact they exist, are subtle, and not easily defined. Therefore, boundaries can be crossed, from seducing to harassment. Where does the pursuit stop and preying start? What are the rules of sexual conduct and who defines them? This paper aims to investigate how we establish what is acceptable and what is not in the realm of sexual behaviour taking into account the interplay of morality and legality in the issue. Additionally, the question of gender keeps coming up and needs addressing. How and if at all do women and men differ when engaging in sexual politics?
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