

ABSTRACTS

PLENARY SPEAKERS:

RE-INVENTING BULGARIAN GOTHIC IN ANOTHER LANGUAGE? GOTHIC- INFLECTED FICTION BY BULGARIAN EXPATRIATES WRITING IN ENGLISH

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The term “Gothic” is rarely used about texts by Bulgarian authors. Nevertheless, a group of writers working in the 1920s and 1930s - Svetoslav Minkov (1902-1966), Vladimir Polyanov (1899-1988), Chavdar Mutafov (1889-1954) and Georgi Raichev (1882 -1947) - produced “diabolical fantasies” deriving from a variety of mostly German and to a lesser extent French Gothic and Neo-Gothic literary influences. While the tradition was discontinued in the era of state socialism (1944 – 1989) on account of “the reorganization and standardization of fiction under the banner of ‘Socialist Realism’” (Muireann Maguire), Gothic-inflected fiction made a significant comeback in the years following the fall of the totalitarian regime. Interestingly, some of it was produced by Bulgarian-born writers writing in English and could be linked to other Anglophone writing in the Gothic and Neo-Gothic modes.

The work of some of the Bulgarian expatriates writing in English may be read as a response to western representations of Bulgaria and more generally speaking, eastern Europe, in terms of exotic Gothicism and political fantasies about demi-Oriental despotism. Dora Ilieva’s novels *The Devil’s Gorge* (2014), *The Master* (2016) and *White Clay* (2017) easily fall within this category. Krassi Zourkova makes use of elements from Bulgarian folklore in her novel *Wildalone* (2015), which is set at Princeton University, a terrain identified by the author herself as “hauntingly Gothic” and likened to “the opulent Hogwarts from *Harry Potter*” (p.375). While Ilieva and Zourkova exploit western readers’ fascination with Europe’s “Orient” and build upon familiar Gothic motifs such as the porousness of political, social, and sexual boundaries and the ambiguous identities of those, who transgress them, Kapka Kassabova and Miroslav Penkov employ elements that are traceable back to the Gothic mode in an attempt to deal with the complexities of migration out of Bulgaria and their fictional characters’ problematic returns to the home country.

The paper’s main focus is on Kassabova’s *Reconnaissance* (1999) and Penkov’s *Stork Mountain* (2016). *Reconnaissance* exemplifies what Roger Luckhurst has termed “trauma Gothic” as it portrays a deeply troubled Bulgarian-born heroine, bound on an erratic journey through her newly adopted country of New Zealand, who is haunted by her family’s and home country’s pasts. Penkov’s *Stork Mountain* similarly focuses on a young character, who must deal with the burdens of a troublesome past. In his case, family history is entangled with the (semi-)mythologized history of the Strandja Mountains. Situated on the Bulgarian-Turkish border, close to Greece, and home of the ancient ritual of fire dancing, the Strandja region is one of south-

east Europe's ethnically and culturally hybrid spaces. Apart from uncovering elements pointing back to the proverbially transgressive Gothic genre and speculating on their significance, I propose to read *Reconnaissance* and *Stork Mountain* as meaningful *commentaries* on previous works of migration literature by “native” Anglophone writers.

FROM REVOLUTION TO REVOLT: BORDERS OF (IN)HUMANIZATION IN KRISTEVA'S THEORY

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Kristeva's conceptual apparatus is examined in terms of the “psychic revolution of matter” (Freud), which subtends Kristeva's early approach to avant-garde poetry (revolution) and her later approach to the novel (revolt). The paper emphasizes the continuity between Kristeva's earlier concepts and the later ones, which is paramount for a proper appreciation of her systematicity in investigating the blend of the *infans* and the artist up and against a miraculous phenomenon: the extraction of the speaking being – before it can address another or even express itself – from what she calls “the corporeal-ecological continuum.”

CROSSING BOUNDARIES IN CANADIAN IMMIGRANT LITERATURE

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This presentation is intended to show border crossings in the context of Canadian immigrant literature, focusing on the works of Tamas Dobozy, a second-generation Hungarian-Canadian writer. Crossing boundaries is present in Dobozy's output in multiple ways, including issues of identity, where characters reach a state of in-betweenness torn between the old and new homeland, attachment to and conflict between different mindsets, customs and traditions, the use of multiple languages, as well as physical border crossings. Tamas Dobozy was born and raised in British Columbia and currently teaches literature at Wilfred Laurier University in Ontario. He has published six volumes to date: the novel *Doggone* (1998) and five collections of short stories, *When X Equals Marylou* (2002), *Last Notes* (2005), *Siege 13* (2012), *5 Mishaps* (2021) and *Ghost Geographies* (2021). His work displays a range of styles and devices, from irony through hyper-realism and metafiction to dark humour and absurdity, and his prose often employs themes of loneliness, isolation and displacement. His language is expressive, his long, almost never-ending sentences frequently attaining the beauty of poetry. His plots tend to use Hungarian-Canadian characters whose fates are presented in the context of twentieth-century Hungarian history, filtered through the perspective and reflections of a first-person narrator. In his stories, the characters often

seek to uncover their family's past, which proves futile as the search is ultimately lost in incomprehensible mystery.

WHAT THE LITERARY CANON OF THE FUTURE WILL LOOK LIKE: THE QUESTION OF POLITICAL CORRECTNESS

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The text attempts to see how canons are institutionalized today and to what extent political correctness can be a fair instrument for transforming canons. It speaks of tendencies to broaden and, above all, to sharpen, and seeks to suggest that it is yet another tool that will turn its back on literary merit at the expense of extra-literary factors.

PARTICIPANTS:

UZBEK “MA’NAVIYAT” AND AMERICAN “SPIRITUALITY”: SOCIAL UNDERSTANDING AND RELIGIOUS BELIEF

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Modern spirituality means higher values and meanings of the people by which people live. It reveals the idea of immaterial reality. It visualizes inner ability of a person to discover the nature of person's being. Spirituality can assist people to restore develop hope and optimism and hopeful outlook about life. While a person tries to find himself in a community and feels a sense of support, involving organized religions and social support. In both languages, “ma’naviyat” and “spirituality” mean a sense of peace, wholeness and equality among the physical, emotional, social and spiritual aspects of life. Spirituality is a very broad concept that can mean different things to different people, but for most, it is the place within us where our soul can find some sense of peace. Some may connect that place with religion, while for others this concept is a completely non-religious experience. Nevertheless, spirituality provides a sense of purpose and meaning, helping us connect with something larger than ourselves by putting us on a spiritual journey to reconnect with our soul. (Priestley, J.G. Towards Finding the Hidden Curriculum: A Consideration of the Spiritual Dimension of Experience in Curriculum Planning. Brit. J. Relig. Educ. 1985. – p. 7.)

In my presentation I will discuss twelve important qualities of a spiritual man. These are: positive thinking, inner peace, egoless, unconditional love, optimism, harmony, humility, responsibility, compassion, justice, simplicity, and reciprocity. I am going to focus on intellectual spirituality in

which the core belief is thinking and learning and exploring different concepts and ideas. The idea of intellectual spirituality is to understand the power of knowledge to achieve freedom. It's not only about learning new things; it is about creating and developing yourself. Self-reflection, learning who you become is the main principle employing strategies as studying, meditation, and contemplation.

HOW DOES *CROSSING LANGUAGE BOUNDARIES* CONDITION THE DYNAMIC CHARACTER OF LEXICAL BORROWING?

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Lexical borrowing is traditionally regarded as a process of lexical items crossing language boundaries on their way from a source language into a recipient one. According to a broad cognitive approach to interlingual lexical contacts, which is proposed in the present paper, the borrowing language plays an active, rather than a passive, role in them. By selective imitation and the use of its own phonemic and graphemic resources it creates close lexical copies of the words that serve as their models in the source language. These copies (traditionally “loanwords”) coexist with their etymons, but as members of different language systems by whose respective networks they are motivated. This fact accounts for the structural and semantic discrepancies between borrowings and their source words. The former always display some degree of re-interpretation caused by factors such as semantic narrowing and widening, and structural simplification. These factors are concrete manifestations of an essential feature of lexical borrowing/copying – loss of original motivation and acquisition of a new one. As a result, the lexical copies diverge from their prototypes in the source language. The depth of divergence can be represented as points on a scale which form a gradient. The dynamism characteristic of lexical borrowing can manifest itself also as a reverse tendency – one of relative convergence in the semantics of the copy and its etymon. This latter phenomenon is illustrated with the appearance of a new suffix in Bulgarian (*-ing*) with the meaning of a deverbal abstract noun.

THE DIARY AND DIALOGUE WITHOUT BORDERS - LITERARY RECEPTION OF VIRGILIO FERREIRA'S "CURRENT ACCOUNT" IN WRITER'S DIARIES IN PORTUGAL

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The present paper aims to analyze the literary reception of the diary series *A Current Account* (1980–1994) by the Portuguese writer Virgilio Ferreira (1916–1996). Comprised of a total of 9 books of over 3,500 pages and kept over 15 years, Ferreira's diary is an obsessive, polymorphic,

genre-hybrid text whose publication undoubtedly gave a powerful boost to the artistic practice of diary writing and diary publishing in Portugal, which in the following decades would be undertaken by prominent writers.

In their immanent duality of self-centered and self-expressive writing that simultaneously aims to reflect and capitalize on the transitory in the external world, some of Fernando Namora's autobiographical texts, the diaries of María Gabriela Liansol and Marcelo Duarte Matias engage in a purposeful dialogue with *A Current Account*, constructing at the meta- and intertextual level different representations of Virgílio Ferreira's diary and its author. Such a dialogue, made possible by the fluid genre boundaries of the diary form, testifies, on the one hand, to the contemporary reception of Ferreira's diary immediately after its publication. On the other hand, giving us an occasion for a new critical reflection today, this dialogue between the diaries of Ferreira, Namora, Liansol and Matias also provokes a new reception, through the prism of polyphonic diary writing, which goes beyond the limits of the textual space of the diary to be transferred to subsequent and perhaps other diaries born from him. Thus, in a dialogue with Ferreira, both Namora and Liansol and Matthias reflect on the motives and impulses that give rise to diary writing, on its ambitions and frustrations, on the use of the diary as a place to store the capital of words, ideas and feelings that everyday life gives rise to, but could not find a place in their other work identified with canonically accepted genres. Writers of diaries are aware of the need for a dialogue with the Other, of crossing the boundaries of the text and searching for the limitless dialogue, of the life-replacing communication through the diary that keeps personal relationships, creative influences or the memory of the creator alive.

WRITER'S STYLE IN USING WORDS: DEVELOPMENT OF FREQUENCY DICTIONARIES OF LITERARY WORKS IN THE UZBEK LANGUAGE BASED ON CORPUS ANALYSIS

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The article reveals the importance of creating a corpus of literary works written in Uzbek from the achievements of corpus linguistics and creating frequency dictionaries based on the search results obtained from it. Also, both the theoretical and practical basis of using corpus analysis is presented with concrete examples. In fact, corpora provide language learners with a vast and unlimited number of linguistic examples. These examples can be widely used not only in language learning and teaching, but also in creating dictionaries. By creating an electronic corpus of literary works, creating a frequency dictionary of words used in them is in itself a contribution of corpus linguistics to the development of lexicology, literary studies and lexicography.

LIVING IN THE GREY ZONE: WAR AND THE CROSSING OF BORDERS IN KURT VONNEGUT'S *SLAUGHTERHOUSE-5* AND ANDREY KURKOV'S *GREY BEES*

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War, has always been an integral part of human history, and it will likely always be. While not a natural state, war is a universal theme in literature, existing since the dawn of the scribbled word. From the beginning of human society writers have tried to fathom why men cross uninvited geographic and cultural borders killing each other.

The present paper looks at how Kurt Vonnegut and Andrey Kurkov, trying to cope themselves with the utter absurdity of war, create a fiction world which falls within the metaphorical space best described as the Grey Zone and show how their characters grapple life within it. The paper suggests that Andrey Kurkov’s grey bees and Kurt Vonnegut’s planet Tralfamadore function as metaphorical conceptualizations of what life is like in societies that cross the borders of normality and sanity, societies in which the boundaries between the real and the surreal are often blurred, and frequently lead to disastrous results.

NEGOTIATING BOUNDARIES: TOWARDS A POST-NATIONAL IMAGINARY IN TIMES OF GLOBALIZATION

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It is argued that globalization is regarded as eliminating borders, but during the last decades we have witnessed the emphasis on creating boundaries. In post-9/11 era, the issue of migration, integration, and security became rapidly and dramatically politicized in Europe, which led many nations to foster their borders. Following 9/11, a series of violent incidents across Europe and fundamentalist acts of terror have triggered public and political attention which enforced a critical reconsideration of the idea of migrants’ integration while retaining their own identity and culture. Consequently, European societies adopted a number of restrictions towards immigration, intensification of borders control and thereby a policy change for integration was introduced. In this paper, I will look at the theorization of boundaries in times of globalization and the crisis of the nation-state it generates from the lens of cultural studies. With a focus on theoretical discussions across different disciplines, I will examine the interrelated questions of identity, culture and difference across both real and symbolic boundaries. I will argue that, owing to migration and multiculturalism, globalisation imposes a post-national imaginary and transcultural forms of belongings. As such, I will discuss that globalization/globalism is not about totally homogenizing cultures, but about creating or reinforcing boundaries, if not at the economic level, at the cultural level.

THE EPISTEMICOLOGICAL PROJECT OF LINGUISTICS

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The forced blend in the title transcends the bifurcation in the proposed talk. As an epistemic project (a direction or field of inquiry) linguistics in the 21st century is diagnosed with a chronic ailment (Kravchenko 2006, 2011; Agha 2007). Despite “*the “linguistic turn” within the academy*” (Agha 2007: 217), the status of linguistics as an epistemological project – i.e. as academic practice and disciplinary, institutionally organized activities, is not significantly more robust. Epistemologically speaking linguistics “is epistemically reconstituted by disciplinary agendas that focus on a select number of its features as extractable fractions, and, by taking them as objects of study, seek performatively to constitute themselves as unified disciplines” (Agha 2007: 218). Against this background, the following argument is developed: while epistemically a tentative solution has been suggested, it cannot be easily epistemologically implemented as social practice, let alone as everyday teaching practice. The offered solution is not rationalizing, but naturalizing language via the concepts of “*linguaging*” (Maturana 1970), “*autopoiesis*” (Maturana 1970) and “*circularity*” as an organizational principle (Kravchenko 2006: 61), which should lead to analyzing “*how the relational dynamics of linguistic interactions trigger changes in the dynamics of the nervous system and the organism as a whole, and how their reciprocal causality is distinguished and described by the linguaging observer in terms of mind, intelligence, reason, and self-consciousness*” (Kravchenko 2011: 352).

While this can solve the epistemic crisis of linguistics and bridge the borders between biology, culture, cognition, society and language, it can hardly be beneficial for linguistics as an epistemological project and teaching practice. The proposed talk discusses the dissociation that transcending boundaries within the epistemic constitution of linguistics creates between theory and its epistemological implementation.

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DIGITAL HUMANITIES AND LITERARY STUDIES: SHARED SPACEA

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The paper examines the stages of development in digital humanities and the role of literary studies in the establishment and consolidation of the scientific field which combines the potential of new technologies and university traditions within the humanities. The topics consistently dominating the scholarly field, research tools, methods applied both to individual texts and to solid corpora, aspects of "micro-" and "macro-analysis", literary mapping, and others are presented in retrospect. Special attention is given to the aspect of self-reflection within the research community as it is reflected in new formats such as digital humanities blogs.

SIMULTANEOUSLY HERE AND THERE: THE TOPIC OF "TRANSLATED MEN" IN JHUMPA LAHIRI'S NOVEL *THE NAMESAKE*

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This article proposes an analysis of the novel *The Nameake* of the Indo-American writer Jhumpa Lahiri, who focuses in her work on the features of the so-called. diasporic consciousness of people who live outside their own cultural context, called by her fellow countryman Salman Rushdie "translated men". The analysis of the work, centred on the image of the main character Gogol, aims at proving that Lahiri exposes the theme of transcultural metamorphoses that transnational migrants go through, daring to break away from their roots, cross borders and indulge in a kind of nomadism in search of a new identity. The novel also raises the issue of the diaspora – nation/nationality distinction. He shows that nation and especially nationalism are not defining categories for Lahiri as a writer living in exile. Her lifestyle in cosmopolitan New York has taught her to overcome the limitations of any kind of national/nationalist discourse. Lahiri defines herself as a consistent cosmopolitan who has overcome the manifestations of ethnocentrism and traditional models of national self-awareness.

SOCIAL THEORY AND THE POLITICAL IMAGINARY IN LOST-RACE FICTION

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The paper aims to analyze late nineteenth-century lost race fiction – considered by many the bona fide “classical” utopia (Clareson, 1975, p. 715) – and focuses on its genre-bending capacity to include and transcend various forms and expressions. Utopian lost-race tales and novels present a platform for testing, in fiction, the relevance of political theories; they benefit from the genre of imaginary voyages and paraphrase eclectically contemporary social sciences. I want to suggest that the political imaginary in late nineteenth-century *hidden* utopias is ingrained with

contemporary social theories which challenge the ethical intentions in such utopian works and question the humanist foundation of utopianism. Karl Mannheim's (1979) insistence on ideology and utopia as opposing as they derive from contrastive political intentions and visions seem to be converged in utopian fiction. Ideology draws the directives of political and social sustainability and manages the postulates for preserving a *status quo*, utopia calls for changes that may be subversive, disturbing the pillars of social order (Mannheim, 1979, p. 173). While utopias speculate about a teleologically complete perfect society, the text world of a utopian narrative projects the implementation of theoretical and untested utopian ideals as the foundation of a eutopian ideology. The paper analyses the overlapping of contemporary social theory and scientific thought in advertising eutopian political ethics which came to be continually pushing the boundaries of humaneness, while diminishing the boundaries between the biological and the social.

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TRANSCENDING BOUNDARIES: LITERATURE, GEOCRITICISM AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

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The article aims at discussing literary studies at the cross-roads with history, geography, ethnicity in an attempt to identify the most recent critical approaches which blur the boundaries between literary texts and other disciplines belonging to the humanities. The analysis has been inspired from, and will focus on, the association of space, the city, and literature, and the interconnection between geography and literary criticism (Westphal, Tally), which led to the mixed boundary of geocriticism. The article will look at the connection between the real and imaginary cartography of literary texts, hybrid borders and spaces as well as at representations of cityspace (Soja), an umbrella term under which history, geography, sociology, economy, and ecology mix to reveal new and challenging meanings of the literary text.

THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER IN INCREASING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE MULTICULTURAL CLASSROOM AND INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

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The present article, positioned in the field of research related to intercultural communication, examines the possibilities for optimizing the multicultural educational environment, for which the teacher plays a key role. The article is an expression of my gratitude to Prof. Madeleine Danova, for sparking my interest in the topic. I am obliged to point out the fact that precisely thanks to her efforts systematic studies on the issue have been carrying out for years at Sofia University, which has allowed every year dozens of teachers to receive qualifications and skills for working in an intercultural environment. I hope that through this text, I contribute for the continuation of a tradition important for the development of Bulgarian education.

“BORDER GNOSIS”: THE ETHNIC OCCULT IN M. G. VASSANJI’S *THE MAGIC OF SAIDA*

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The present paper offers an analysis of M. G. Vassanji’s novel *The Magic of Saida* from the perspective of a Walter Mignolo’s concept of the “border gnosis”, which he coins on the basis of Valentin Y. Mudimbe’s concept of “African gnosis” as developed in his *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy and the Order of Knowledge* (1988). It designates “a way of thinking about knowledge conflicts typical of borderlands, be they epistemological, ethical, secular or religious.” The analysis connects these ideas to the existence of a particular cultural discourse in twentieth-century North-American literature, a discourse I call *the ethnic occult*, which is located within the fantastic as defined by Tsvetan Todorov, and takes different disguises: as the discourse of the phantasmagoric, as the discourse of hybridization and diasporic imagination, and as the discourse of glocalization, all of which often work in simultaneity. But in all these instances it establishes a new mode of communication, thus giving expression to a new form of hybrid cultural identity. Further, it produces new locations of the self, which I call diasporic glocalities, and which have become an essential part of our contemporary society.

DEVELOPING THE PROBLEM-SOLVING CAPACITY OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS THROUGH LITERATURE TEACHING AND INNOVATIVE TECHNIQUES OF DRAMA IN EDUCATION

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This paper focuses on an innovative intervention programme, based on selected literary texts teaching accompanied with drama in education techniques, that aims to cultivate the problem-

solving skill of primary school students. Discovery through problem-solving process is the vehicle that leads to learning. During this process, student perceives and experiences different aspects of problem solving by overcoming each time the obstacles he/she has to face until problem is solved. Literary texts, on the other hand, with their numerous characters and the extensive variety of situations they deal with, offer a wealth of strategies for problem solving. The intervention project was implemented in 2021, lasted three months and was based on the methodology of experimental research. Four primary schools were selected by simple random sampling and during this period, 12 innovative interventions were implemented, designed and adapted to literary texts and presented using drama in education techniques. The sample consisted of 176 students aged 8-10 years. The results of the research showed that an intervention program based on teaching literary texts through the innovative practices of drama in education can develop the problem-solving ability of primary school students.

CROSSING THE BOUNDARIES OF TRADITIONAL PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH AS AN INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE

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The development of English into an international language, its heterogeneous and pluralistic character and the ever more complex contexts in which it is used raise the important question of what form teaching practices should take in the age of global English. This paper looks at some traditional pedagogical practices associated with the teaching of English as a foreign language and argues for the need to rework them by crossing their boundaries and adopting an EIL-aware perspective, i.e. one which takes into account the current status of English as an international language and prepares students to deal with its linguistic, cultural and functional diversity. Indeed, students should be familiar with the diverse character of English, appreciative of its linguistic variability and able to function well in international communicative encounters which bring together speakers of different lingua-cultural backgrounds. Drawing upon insights from the teaching of English at tertiary level in Bulgaria, this contribution provides examples of EIL-inspired pedagogical practices which can be used to help students develop such knowledge, attitudes, and skills. More specifically, it focuses on a traditional English language course offered at the Department of English and American Studies at Sofia University and discusses the way in which it has been reworked to incorporate an EIL-aware perspective.

PSYCHOLOGICAL CONFLICT OF THE MAIN CHARACTER IN *THE WINTER OF OUR DISCONTENT* BY JOHN STEINBECK

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John Steinbeck is the prominent literary representative who greatly contributed to the development of world literature. His works reflect the psyche of the period to which they belong, the contradictions of society, different characters and destinies, changes, disagreements or imbalances between society and man. In the following presentation there have been drawn some views about the comparison of the use of psychological conflict in the novels “The Winter of Our Discontent” by John Steinbeck and “Adolat manzili” (“Justice Venue”) by Adil Yakubov. Both novelists created their works at a time when the spiritual, moral and social situation in the country was complicated. The similarities between the literary themes, main idea, conflict, title and characters of the works are discussed in it. In the novels the main characters fight against injustices and frauds that occur in public life and everyday life. These struggles are expressed in the internal world of the main characters. In Steinbeck’s last novel, unlike Adil Yakubov’s work, there is much more pessimistic spirit. Through the effective use of internal conflict the authors verbally expressed not only the image of the heroes' psyche, but also the contradictions of life. Along with similar feelings such as sincerity, kindness and love in the heroes, it can also be witnessed that they have different qualities. The works of the writers are united by vividness, truthfulness, boldness of the sharp social, spiritual and enlightenment issues of the time, and the ability to open new facets of the truth about man and his heart.

INSTITUTIONAL BORDERS: A DISCIPLINED APPROACH TO INTERDISCIPLINARITY

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Already a century ago, the then new discipline of anthropology was dubbed “the most humanistic of the sciences and the most scientific of the humanities” (Alfred Kroeber). Indeed, ever since its founding, anthropology has been a discipline with moving borders. Its core eventually formed around a few methods; yet, the conceptual borders have always encroached on history, geography, even literature, and philosophy. How do these disciplines react to such encroachment?

In this paper, I reflect on the interactions between the School of Social Sciences and the School of Humanities at an American university. In analyzing their actions, statements, and students’ demands for supporting interdisciplinarity, I propose that – rather logically, than paradoxically – true interdisciplinarity thrives in disciplined institutions with relatively clear agendas. Further, I maintain that while such institutions work against some disciplinary boundaries, they inevitably maintain others. In the specific case study, renegotiating the boundary between anthropology and literature became a strengthening of the line dividing the social sciences from the humanities.

BOUNDARIES AND THEIR IMPACT. ADDRESSING THE PURPORTEDLY MARGINAL STATUS OF VOCATIVES

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Address phenomena form a significant part of human communication (see the place Jacobson accords to the conative function, among others). In spite of this, vocatives (the term being applied broadly to refer to all nominals that can appear within the so-called vocative phrase), which are among the most prototypical address phenomena, seem to be considered marginal in a wide array of discussions. In this paper, which serves as a continuation of a paper presented in 2018 dealing with the same subject-matter in more general terms, I offer further arguments demonstrating i. that vocatives are considered marginal because they are phenomena lying at interfaces, ii. that this stance leads to their being treated as insignificant for theoretical purposes and iii. that the two points above stem from a logical fallacy whereby the largely discrete distinctions between fields of study obscure the fluid nature of a phenomenon, and thereby its well-informed assessment. I propose that combining findings from fields of study could i. help to de-trivialise vocatives, putting their assumed marginal status, which stands in striking contrast with their ontological significance, into question, and ii. allow for more uniformity of their treatment.

RE/VISIONS: LITERARY BOUNDARIES IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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My combined interests in North American literature and culture on the one hand, digital culture and electronic literature, on the other, despite being so diverse as subjects, eventually blended in what I teach and in how I teach it, and also became the focus of my critical inquiry. I set out to explore the intersections between the above two areas to establish the boundaries of literature in the digital era: writing, reading, and teaching it.

Knowing that digital media help foster continuous partial attention, decreased working memory, multi-tasking, high levels of stimulation, low-level threshold for boredom, and the addiction to novelty, the aim is to map out the main shift in reading practices, including digital social reading (DSR). This paper builds on two connected developments in the age of post-print (Katherine Hayles): computational reading of literature written by humans (computer-assisted text analysis) and humans reading computer-generated literature (most recently by OpenAI's Generative Pretrained Transformer, GPT-3). Some answers as to future developments will be suggested based on explorations on similar themes in speculative fiction.

SOME SEMIOETHICAL QUESTIONS CONCERNING LITERARY MODERNISM: JAMES JOYCE'S *ULYSSES* AND DJUNA BARNES'S *NIGHTWOOD*

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The following paper addresses key ethical questions concerning subjectivity and the body in relation to history and the socius from a semiotic perspective. The scientific advances made by Thomas Sebeok reveal the far-sighted humanism of a “global semiotics” and combine it with an ethical reading of signs so as to undertake an analysis of all sign activity from a transdisciplinary perspective. And now, a hundred-odd years after the publication of James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) and Djuna Barnes's *Nightwood* (1936), some semioethical dimensions anticipated by the main characters can consciously be approached. The question of how we read and teach these two key modernist texts seems especially pertinent and even urgent considering the modern scholastic analytical and theoretical trends in literary criticism and higher education. In this respect fitting conclusions in relation to otherness understood in terms of alternatives and the interpellative dangers of semiotic communication can be drawn from Stephen Dedalus's inconclusive oscillation between his autonomous but unstable self and the powerful constitutive discourses of human history. And while Robin Vote's final disclosure of the animalistic undifferentiated unconscious within the glottocentric and anthropocentric system can be read both as a negation of the human body as a social sign and as an affirmation of the “mother sense” on a sociocritical level, the detotalising method of semioethical inquiry can account in a revealing way for both conflicting interpretations. In an age in which people are drawn and repelled by the homologisation of a global communicative-productive system, considerations of a non-dichotomous kind can be especially revealing of the life-affirming nature of all communication. By considering this humane call for justice, the conclusions, drawn from the powerful confrontation of Stephen and Robin with the word of the others and their absolute otherness, are especially relevant even today.

THRESHOLDS AND WINDOWS: CROSSING AT THE POINT OF PARATEXT

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The paper discusses the boundaries of text in a literary work by focusing on paratexts such as introductions, epigraphs, dedications, and footnotes. Taking cue from Genette's seminal study *Seuils* (translated in English as *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*) it proposes a view of paratexts not necessarily as *thresholds* but rather as *windows*, the window metaphor highlighting their capacity to relativize the boundaries of text and open them to a number of intertextual relations. To extend the metaphor further, one could enter a text through the window as well as the threshold, so the paper explores readings which might ensue from such “illegitimate” approach. What if we are interested in a text *because* of its epigraph or dedication, or if an introduction shapes

our reading with an unusual force, as might happen in an ideologically charged situation or a deficit of cultural background? Particular attention is paid to introductions directly trying to influence the reception of literary works in translation, as was the standard practice when English and American literature had to cross the boundaries of Bulgaria during (but also before) socialism.

THE MIGRATION OF TRADITIONAL PUBLISHING TO THE INTERNET: THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND FANDOMS IN PUBLISHING ORIGINAL WORK

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Several bestsellers today have had their debut as fanfiction published independently by the authors on websites destined for fanworks, such as Wattpad and Archive Of Our Own. Among these bestsellers, the most recognized today are *Fifty Shades of Grey* by E.L. James, and *After* by Anna Todd. In an increasingly technology-dependent society, the migration of traditional publishing to the internet is not necessarily surprising. Several authors have taken to publishing original writing on their social media or blogs as serialized works or as part of newsletters to which people could subscribe.

The present paper discusses the boundaries of traditional publishing versus the boundaries in the use of fandom as a steppingstone for publishing works, as well as the constraints and added issues when it comes to online independent publishing (such as a lack of an agent, hate comments, cyber bullying, copyright claims etc.), in the hopes of emphasizing the complexities of the evolving publishing industry.

PECULIAR FEATURES OF COMEDY GENRE IN CONTEMPORARY UZBEK LITERATURE: UTKIR KHASHIMOV'S WORKS

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Bukhara State University, Uzbekistan

The comedy genre in Uzbek literature has a rich history. Humor, satire as a separate ideological and artistic principle reflecting real life for a long time played a significant role in the literature of all civilized peoples. Satire as a method of criticism in a comic form of social vices was also widespread in Uzbek folklore. Fictional comic national heroes such as Nasreddin Afandi and Aldar Kusa demonstrated the vices of their times through the art of wit and satire.

Utkir Khoshimov made a worthy contribution to the development of this direction. It can be said without exaggeration that Utkir Khashimov entered literature as a "blazing fire". The first main feature is that he turns his works of art into a weapon of propaganda by means of "light" accents, but they reflect the actual problems of today in the artistic aspect. The second feature of the writer's works is that all problems force us to seek answers to complex questions. Sometimes

these answers are very touching and are reflected in a high artistic form, they are depicted in the fates of heroes that are often found in works.

Utkir Khashimov, in his novels, took the path of depicting life outside the principles of idealization, therefore his novels are truly realistic, and the life is presented in the totality of its complex contradictions. The writer's novels are very attractive in terms of content, language skills and artistry. His talent also manifested itself in drama.

MOCKING HUMAN WITH NON-HUMAN ANIMALS: ANTHROPOMORPHIC IMPERIALISM OF THE BIO-SPHERE IN SHAKESPEAREAN DRAMA

Thakurdas JANA

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The longstanding dichotomy between the human beings and the non-human beings and universal superficiality of standing human being over the flat and lying animals in an age of continuous modernisation, when animalism of a man is measured on the basis of its intellectual harmony and prescribed perfectness, have triggered a class to mock the 'others' by similarising them with non-human animals or by creating anthropomorphic animals to represent typical human characteristics. The established equalisation of 'good', 'beautiful', 'perfect', with human beings and of 'bad', 'ugly', 'imperfect' with non-human beings still stresses the unethical subjecting of animals to mockery following the Kantian ethics and creates an anthropomorphic imperialism of the biosphere as was practiced by the colonisers in defining the colonised as animals. So, the Biblical definition human supremacy has triggered the writers of 'canonical' literature to use non-human beings to mock human beings in contrast with the praising and worshiping of non-human animals in indigenous literature of different communities. With this background, this paper aims to highlight how literature of the Renaissance period, an age of anthropocentrism, showcased the psychological exploitation of the mute/muted non-human beings by man with special reference to William Shakespeare, as Hamlet's description of an ignorant as a beast or in relating the witches of Macbeth with non-human animals.

WHY A COURSE ABOUT CREOLE LANGUAGES IN A UNIVERSITY PROGRAM OF AFRICAN STUDIES?

Gueorgui JETCHEV

Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski, Bulgaria

The talk demonstrates that Creole Studies (Creolistics) are important for African Studies as far as are concerned the sociohistorical context of creole genesis, (including matters of identity and ideology), the substratist approach (as opposed to the universalist approach) and the theory of creole exceptionalism, the analysis of contact-induced change and the African influences in

Creoles, Pidgins and Mixed languages, the language planning and the status of creoles in different parts of the world

BETWEEN FACTS AND FICTION: STORYTELLING IN TRUE-CRIME DOCUMENTARIES

Irena **JURKOVIĆ**
University of Zadar, Croatia

This presentation investigates the narrative conventions in contemporary true-crime documentaries, discussing specifically the blurring of lines between fiction and journalism and the genre's raising awareness on various forms of systemic injustices. Even though true crime today is among the most read fiction, and its popular media formats—film, podcasts, documentaries — are highly consumed and enjoyed by both audiences and critics, the discussion of this specific genre is somewhat limited pertaining to questions of ethical dilemma and the affective response of readers/viewers. However, storytelling in true-crime documentaries opens up another set of questions and conflicts regarding genre and media boundaries as well as the question of destabilizing existing interpretations. In *The Rise of True Crime: 20th Century Murder and American Popular Culture*, Jean Murley analyzes the narrative conventions of the true-crime genre and concludes that „although laying strong claims to factuality, truthfulness and realistic representation of actual events, [true-crime] is driven by and preoccupied with themes of an updated, contemporary gothic horror “(5). By observing narrative conventions in most contemporary true-crime documentaries it becomes apparent that this nonfiction medium utilizes numerous techniques and rhetorical devices typical for detective fiction and/or horror stories while framing it within investigative journalism. In an attempt to answer questions such as how true crime challenges our notions of narrative conventions and how do they affect interpretation, this presentation will specifically address three recent true-crime documentaries: *Beware the Slenderman* (2016), *Mommy Dead and Dearest* (2017), and *The Girl in the Picture* (2022).

READING CONTEXTUAL CHANGE: PREFACES TO AMERICAN POETRY COLLECTIONS IN BULGARIAN TRANSLATION

Milena **KATSARSKA**
Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv, Bulgaria

Bouncing off the paratextual logic of prefaces which communicate across the boundary of inner- and outer-directed discourse, the presentation seeks to highlight some of the contextual changes, as well as continuities, that could be discerned in the Bulgarian context between 1970 and 2010 vis-a-vis its ‘reading’ (presentation and recommendation) of American poetry in book form. To do so, the discussion focuses on the two allographic prefaces that frame one of the most

comprehensive local efforts in collecting and presenting American poetry to Bulgarian readers which stand forty years apart. Namely, the two versions of the preface written by Leda Mileva to the collection *American Poets* published by Narodna Kultura in 1970 and its second revised edition published by Zaharii Stoyanov Publishing House in 2010.

CULTURE THROUGH TRANSTEXTUALITY: DECODING LAILA LALAMI'S IMPLICATIONS IN *THE MOOR'S ACCOUNT*

Feruza **KHAJIEVA**

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Transtextuality, the term coined by French structuralist Gerard Genette (Gerard Genette *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, 1982) investigates the verbal layer of the text, challenges the reader to ignite the recollections connected with previous texts and think about the author's intentions of interweaving text into text. Inter-, para-, archi-, meta-, and hypertextuality are the known types of transtextuality. Contemporary investigation of transtextuality enables the addressee to decode not only the original/initial source of the statement, but also to think about the purpose of the writer to fuse hypo- and hypertexts.

African-American writer Laila Lalami implements transtextual devices to imbue her text with Moroccan cultural codes such as proverbs, fairy-tale, quotes from religious sources. In my presentation I will focus on interpretation of Moroccan proverbs interwoven into her travelogue about first African slave to step on American lands and decode a fairy tale which serves as a core element to carry the main idea of the novel. Moreover, through structural analysis of quotes from Holy Qur'an and hadith in the novel I intend to show cultural traditions, Islamic religious values and their didactic features as the examples of intertextual devices used in the novel.

EXPLORING OUR IDENTITY

Dilafroz **KHODJAEVA**

Bukhara State University

Cultural identity theory involves several aspects of a person's being. Their race, nationality, gender, location, age, gender, sexuality, history and religious beliefs are put together to form a cultural identity. By combining each of these elements, a theory is created as to why a person acts and behaves the way they do. When asked to define cultural identity, many people respond to the question by comparing it to a lifestyle. Culture and identity go hand in hand when describing a person's background, religious persuasion, and sexual orientation.

How to preserve our cultural identity? By preserving our culture, we preserve our identity even if we are living in a foreign country. Over the centuries, ancient and prosperous land of Uzbekistan hosted representatives of different ethnic groups, cultures and regions. Hospitality,

kindness, generosity and a true tolerance have always been distinct traits of Uzbek nation and its mentality. These traits were inherited by ancient ancestors. Nowadays, representatives of more than 130 nations and ethnic groups coexist as a one family in Uzbekistan. They work with great dedication in all areas. *Uzbek culture evolved blending various customs and traditions of the nations who inhabited the territory of today's Uzbekistan.*

In the presentation the focus will be on several ways of preserving cultural identity. These ways include:

- Cooking family recipes;
- Sharing one's cultural art and technology;
- Conducting interviews;
- Following a family tree;
- Accepting changes and many others.

DEATH BECOMES US: CONTEMPORARY US-AMERICAN NARRATIVES OF THE END OF LIFE

Antje **KLEY**

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In her study of crumbling fantasies of the good life under late capitalist conditions, *Cruel Optimism*, Lauren Berlant observes different kinds of impasse which people across the planet encounter as “suspended stretches of life and time in the present [...] when one no longer knows what to do or how to live and yet, while unknowing, must adjust” (199). While Berlant seeks to articulate a transnationally pervasive, even if frequently clandestine contemporary condition, this talk is concerned with one specific type of impasse that occurs as the experience of death disrupts the grieving subject's social fabric, leaving them scrambling for their bearings in space and time to develop modes of leave-taking and living with loss. This talk traces aesthetic negotiations of the social and affective, embodied, and relational time-spaces of grief in readings of recent US-American autobiographical and more explicitly fictional writing.

The talk argues that literary narratives of the end of life develop vocabularies for experiences of loss frequently encountered as unspeakable, and that they elucidate and enact tentative orientations in time, social and geographical space where knowledge seems to have fallen away. They ‘map’ the shifting landscapes of grief, so to speak. The talk also explores how the aesthetic mediation of loss relates individual patterns of dis/orientation to the social landscapes in which they are embedded. Literary narratives of the end of life are thus positioned as a much-needed form of alternative knowledge production on dying to currently dominant medical, nursing, insurance and legal discourses.

THE TUNING OF GENERATIONAL IDENTITY IN ALISTAIR MACLEOD'S “THE TUNING OF PERFECTION” (1984)

Alexander **KOSTOV**
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The problem of identity is crucial to the examination of Canadian literature. From its very onset, the Canadian literary tradition has faced many hindrances as to the ubiquitous role of identity in the formation of its customs and traditions. What is more, each province has been adding fuel to this unquenching fire, by posing more and more hindrances to the resolution of this identity conundrum. The question “What is Canadian?” slowly transforms into “Where is here?”, posed by writers and scholars such as Northrop Frye and Margaret Atwood. Writers from the provinces have been doing their best to share their voice and vision in the creation of this unique Canadian identity. The province of Nova Scotia, once being among the central and most developed regions in Canada, has suffered the inevitable march of time, and has fallen recently into oblivion. Still, its literary spirit endured and is among its literary representatives are some writers that best illustrate the abovementioned identity anguish. Alistair MacLeod’s fiction, and the short story “The Tuning of Perfection” in particular, deal exclusively with the hesitant identity of his characters and how they try to preserve their unique place in the ever-changing world around them. They are torn between the pull of the traditional world associated with the land and their ancestry, and are, on the other, constantly battered by the transformative winds of the present-day world.

TEACHING OF LEGAL FRENCH IN BULGARIA: THE EXPERIENCE OF SOFIA UNIVERSITY ST. KLIMENT OHRIDSKI

Jeanne **KRISTEVA**
Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski

Margarita **RUSKI**
Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski

The purpose of the paper is looking at the legal courses in French included in the curricula of Sofia University to analyze the needs of the students and the content of the courses offered, to identify the problems arising in the selection, organization and presentation of the pedagogical materials. The paper analyzes the complex and delicate pedagogical situation in which the learner's profile, professional needs and their effective interrelation pose a real challenge to the teachers, most often linguists by education.

It is their responsibility to maintain the necessary balance between legal and linguistic components, focusing in his courses on the various aspects of language, lexical, syntactic, textual, phraseological, pragmatic, as well as specialized knowledge in the field of law.

METHODOLOGY, CURRICULA AND DIGITAL ASPECTS OF STUDYING THE HUMANITIES

Marija **KRSTEVA**

University "Goce Delcev", Stip, Republic of North Macedonia

The field of humanities and its over-arching presence in all spheres of life is undisputed. As such, humanities both hold the question and the dynamic answer to the position of digital knowledge and production. On the one hand, the study of humanities shows how students respond to having the study material available digitally and on the other how the technological advancements work to respond to the needs of new generations of teachers and learners. This paper illustrates some prominent ideas in teaching and studying humanities, literature in particular, in the context of digital humanities. In this way, digital humanities can be seen as a two-way street in both establishing and providing information, knowledge, and skills.

THE DICHOTOMOUS BOUNDARY OF HOME AND ABROAD: CONRAD'S MODERNIST WORLD AND HA JIN'S CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT

Chi Sum Garfield **LAU**

Hong Kong Metropolitan University, Hong Kong

Joseph Conrad (1857-1924) was a modernist writer who shared several similar biographical features, particularly in terms of his writing journey and choice of language, with the contemporary Chinese Anglophone writer Ha Jin (1956-). Joseph Conrad's *Amy Foster* (1901) and Ha Jin's *The Woman from New York* (2000) show the embodiment of autobiographical elements, through which the dichotomous boundary of home and abroad as part of the migrant experience and a common encounter between Conrad's modernist world and Ha Jin's globalized context would be examined in the presentation.

In *Amy Foster*, Conrad portrays how an Eastern European becomes the object of xenophobic assault and exploitation upon his arrival in Britain as a shipwreck survivor. It brings out the dichotomy of crossing geographical boundary and one's peripheral status. In *The Woman from New York*, Ha Jin shows that the glorious homecoming of a Chinese woman has been viewed suspiciously by her family and townsfolk as a betrayer. Her American voyage in the pursuit of personal goal infringes the national boundary of trust.

EARWICKER DERANGEMENT SYNDROME: AN AGE OF POST-TRUTH READING OF FINNEGANS *FAKE!*

Jonathan **MCCREEDY**

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In my presentation, I will analyse Book I of James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* from an “age of post-truth” perspective. This approach signifies that within my reading of the book I will be referring to modern-day concepts about how we receive our journalistic information and also how conspiracy theory has become so prevalent in society because of widespread fake news circulation.

Chapters 2, 3, and 4 of *Finnegans Wake* focus heavily on the private history of a character titled HCE (or "Earwicker") and the myriad of libellous and slanderous stories that have been promulgated by the scandal mongering yellow papers and their deceitful journalists about his life. I will, therefore, interpret the news “coverage” in these sections as if they are being reported today (defining the resulting interpretation as a "post-truth" reading). It is my argument that *Finnegans Wake*'s representation of political lies and bias in the media has close thematic and structural connections with fake news reportage on contemporary news networks. We can analyse the mechanics of how forgeries work, how fake news is intentionally created and released with the objective to generate viral, toxic content among the populace, and how hatred, paranoia and xenophobia can be used by journalists to manipulate their often highly impressionable audience. Most of the news reading public in *Finnegans Wake*, in fact, readily believe anything that is “anti-Earwicker” and consume their journalistic intake seemingly through a process of confirmation bias. Often these self-professed “expert” opinions have absolutely no evidence for their outlandish beliefs whatsoever

In conclusion, by using an “age of post-truth” perspective, many sections of Book I can be re-read from the viewpoint that *Finnegans Wake* anticipates the modern-world's toxic and warped media with its “alternative facts” and total absence of journalistic integrity. This reading demonstrates *Finnegans Wake*'s ability to “live” in a timeframe that is continuously being updated, which allows for us to analyse, in a unique way, the troubled times we live in.

COHERENCE RELATIONS IN GFL LESSONS: A CASE STUDY

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Plamen **TSVETKOV**
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Most children start building coherent discourse before the age of three but the complete mastery of the most important linguistic devices of coherence, the connectives, is a long process that continues far beyond the age five when basic morphosyntactic structures have already been acquired. In addition, foreign language learners acquire this ability also very quickly. In this paper we describe the acquisition of coherence relations marked by connectives by German-speaking children in their first language and compare the results with the offered acquisition path of connectives in textbooks for adolescent learners of German as a foreign language. Similarities and differences are shown and discussed in terms of order of acquisition, frequency of input and timeline of acquisition.

CROSSING BORDERS: SOME HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS IN AFRICAN AND AMERICAN LITERARY IMAGINATION

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As it is stated in the CFP: "The humanities, in other words, appear to dwell in a continually expanding field of borderless interaction with all disciplines which inform our knowledge of the world and determine the perspectives employed in considering the subject and the object of studies that overlap in the humanities." In that vein, some African and American literary works often expand from fictional stories about human-beings' social organizations to cross borders into the field of human rights which are supposed to be under the sole care of lawyers and their affiliated professionals.

Whether consciously or unconsciously, some African and American authors show their deep concerns about human rights violations through violence against girls and women in their books. Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in its second section stipulates: "Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection."

Authors like the American lady Maya Angelou as well as the African one Buchi Emecheta, to name but a few, have clearly vented their spleen on the frequent rapes and sexual abuses of girls in African and American societies. Other related issues such as teen pregnancy and forced marriages prove that a lot of girls in the world do not benefit from any special care and social protection in their communities. In their novels, both authors raise those poignant human rights issues and draw people's attention to the social consequences of such horrible and barbaric acts.

The resorted solutions to rapes and teen pregnancies are usually abortion or forced marriages, the consequences of which can also be devastating. Maya in *I know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou and Gwendolen in *Gwendolen* by Buchi Emecheta; both characters undergo human rights violations that need to be addressed in African and American societies. It is high time girls grew up and lived in harmonious environments while enjoying much protection. It stands to reason that little girls are raped because they are not adequately protected within their own families or communities. Maya Angelou is raped at six by her mother's boyfriend, whereas

Gwendolen has undergone a similar ordeal from Uncle Johnny, an old neighbor and friend of her family.

BEYOND THE NATION-STATE: CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS TRANSNATIONAL RESEARCH FOCI

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Based on intellectual frames of reference and academic assumptions, research foci significantly influence the scope, approach, and outcome of research across disciplines such as history or political theory. This article critically examines these foci, thereby paying attention to the conceptual origins and implications of these scopes. The article proposes a novel spectrum that contrasts the nation-state centered methodological nationalism to the global lens of cosmopolitanism. Transnationalism is placed in between these two, due to its sensitivity to multiple localities and cross-border variables. A systematic review of publications regarding the 2011 Arab uprisings shows a consistent trend in which the predominant prism of analysis is methodologically nationalist. This article then takes some steps in critically discussing how these foci include/exclude variables and scales, how they draw these borders, and what this means for the utility of each of the foci. Ultimately, the aim of the article is to scrutinize the a priori assumptions of research foci, how some of them are connected to nationalist ideology and Eurocentrism, and how they can/should be addressed to improve research across the disciplines of humanities and social sciences.

THE INTERPRETATION OF THE MYTHOLOGICAL IMAGE OF FAIRY IN THE WORKS OF ALISHER NAVOY AND WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

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It is known that mythological images have been widely used in oral and written literature for centuries in almost all nation's literature. Elves, fairies, goblins, trolls, and dragons are some of the most common mythological characters in spoken and written English literature. The image of fairy is common in modern English literature, but the origin of mythological images is rooted in a long-standing tradition in modern literature. Mythological images can be found in the examples of Medieval English literature, in the works of William Shakespeare too.

It is observed that the image of fairies is often referred to not only in the examples of Uzbek folklore, but also in classic literary works. In particular, the image of a fairy is widely used in the work of the great Uzbek poet Alisher Navoi. In the poet's work, the interpretation of mythological images served to express more mystical concepts and views in accordance with the poetic tradition

of that time. In his works, Navoi managed to use the plots of myths, sometimes giving them new forms, sometimes keeping the main motifs. In addition, in the work of the poet, the tree of life, the water of life, the sun, the moon, the wind, the star, and similar traditional images can be found. These images were used to express certain aesthetic ideas when illuminating the problems of the era in which the poet lived.

THE PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE IN *FRANKENSTEIN*: CROSSING BOUNDARIES

Lorraine NASSER

PhD Candidate at Tel Aviv University, Israel

This paper will examine the different kinds of knowledge and boundary crossing, and the lessons we can learn from Shelley and *Frankenstein* on both. English author Mary Shelley wrote *Frankenstein* in 1818. This novel is regarded by many as the first work of science fiction, marking Shelley's first act of boundary crossing: genre creation. She published this novel anonymously at first, as it was not accepted for women to publish their works publicly during that time. This marks her second act of boundary crossing: a woman's literary publication in the early 1800s. The novel tells the story of a scientist called Victor Frankenstein who creates a "wretched creature" and brings it to life, marking the third type of boundary crossing: a crossing of a moral boundary.

My presentation focuses on the different ways in which we can cross boundaries in the humanities and the ramifications of each. Shelley writing *Frankenstein* in the early 1800s was an amazing accomplishment that paved the way for many writers to dare and produce more literary works of a similar nature. It is an encouraging example of what awaits us on the other end of the pursuit of knowledge. Frankenstein's moral crossing, disguised as a pursuit after knowledge, on the other hand, brought about destruction, death, and unfulfilled desires. If *Frankenstein* is not a condemnation of the pursuit of knowledge, then what exactly is the kind of knowledge that should not be pursued?

DISINFORMATION AND THE MULTIDISCIPLINARY EFFORT NEEDED TO UNDERSTAND AND COUNTER IT

Georgi NIAGOLOV

New Bulgarian University, Bulgaria

The proposed paper starts from the understanding that certain boundaries must never be crossed – such is the boundary distinguishing between truth and untruth. There is little doubt that today disinformation, in all its various forms, is one of the most serious threats that our civilization is facing. Hardly a novel phenomenon in itself, it has been tremendously enhanced by recent research in psychology and cognitive studies, as well as by the rapidly advancing technological capacity of the new media for information dissemination and targeting. Now that disinformation is being

weaponized by rogue international and domestic players, we observe anxiously how it perplexes individual belief systems, exacerbates social divisions and inhibits the democratic process. It affects the social fabric in so many ways and at so many levels that understanding and countering it necessitates a multidisciplinary effort. The proposed paper explores the current disinformation landscape in Bulgaria trying to imagine what this multidisciplinary effort could look like and more specifically what would be the role of the humanities in it.

TOTEMISM AND HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY: RITUAL AS FRAMEWORK OF GENDER POLITICS AND IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION IN OKWAIBE PERFORMANCE OF UBURU, EBONYI STATE, NIGERIA

Chukwu Romanus **NWOMA**, PhD. and Ifeoma Francisca **NWOMA**
Alex Ekwueme Federal University, Ndufu-Alike, Ebonyi State, Nigeria

Okwaibe, a fish totem in Uburu, Ebonyi State, Nigeria spiritually connects the members of the clan to their ancestors with the exclusion of women, even when it is not a male gender totem. Although the fish totem is not sex-marked, it is heavily gender-discriminatory; given that only males elaborate its narratives, perform its rituals, music/chants and other performances associated with it. Women are neither symbolically represented by the totem nor spiritually connected to it, yet it is a clan totem and not a male gender totem. Despite that the totemic fishes have both male and female, their total number as Okwaibe fishes represents only the number of male members of the Umu-uzoigwe clan. Exclusion-inclusion nexus based on gender occurred in the buildup to aggregated communal identity. Through the approaches of hegemonic masculinity and cultural hegemony, this study interrogates an Igbo subgroup's rationalization of gender identity through a totemic form. It seeks to uncover the concealed but fundamental fashion in which women's presence is undermined, repressed, glossed over, and severed from a clan's spiritual symbol. It hopes to explore the intersection between humans, animal, religion, and culture as it reveals the marginal and less-studied aspect of women's experience.

THE TAMING OF THE PANTHER: SECRET/DEADLY IDENTITIES IN THE NOVEL *LES ÉCHELLES DU LEVANT* BY AMIN MAALOUF

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South-Western University Neofit Rilski, Bulgaria

The focus of this study is on work („Ports of call“,) author (A. Maalouf), phenomena, and problems, that are characteristic in different degrees of the 20th and the first quarter of the 21st century. They reflect the image of the Self and the Other, the foreigner, the adventures of identity and the search for one's landmarks in the contemporary environment. The possibility of being truly tolerant is discussed with a great deal of skepticism, because difference continues to evoke a latent

hostility. The characters of this novel are mainly wretched people with an uncertain destiny and an open future, who are doomed to seek empathy in an uncomfortable universe. Left alone in a multilingual and foreign world, they must build a new meaning for themselves, aware of the impossibility of arranging the jigsaw and reassembling the shattered whole.

We share the idea that the cultures that stay isolated wither away; on the other hand, the cultures that remain confined within themselves deform, and only those cultures that maintain the balance of borrowing and lending tend to be healthy and thriving, hence the insistence on interaction between the different cultures on the basis of equality and mutual respect, because the imitation of the Western model is dangerous when it is internationalized in the intellectual concept of the world in the culture and literature of the nations that are not part of the Eurocenter.

TEACHERS' VIEWS AND ATTITUDES ABOUT EUROPEAN IDENTITY AND EUROPEAN DIMENSION THROUGH THE PERSPECTIVE OF TEACHING EUROPEAN LITERATURE IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

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University of Peloponnese, Greece

This paper examines in depth the results of a study carried out in the spring of 2022 and detects the strength of European identification of 506 Greek teachers of all Primary Education specialties, as well as their perceptions of European dimension through the teaching of European literature. It is commonly and widely accepted that educational system must support the development of those abilities of students which shape them into active citizens on a local, national and European level. A process, which can and must start from a young age.

Certainly, in this project, the national and European framework, which sets the detailed curriculum, is vital in promoting the unity of culturally diverse students, the cultivation of a European consciousness and a sense of European identity. All of which, are valuable for the individual to live in a society without discrimination. In addition to the above, it is necessary for primary school teachers to be properly qualified to promote European values, which means having intercultural competence and appropriate pedagogical and methodological approaches.

In these contexts, undoubtedly, teaching of selected texts of European literature could contribute, as a useful tool, to the strengthening of European identity of the students, along with the teacher's crucial role. Therefore, an attempt was made to detect the self-perception of European identification of a group of Primary Education teachers. Furthermore, to investigate and capture their opinions and attitudes regarding the use and contribution of European dimension of teaching literature to the cultivation of the European identity of their students. Additionally, the research examines its contribution to enhancing the diversity of mixed primary school classes. Finally, it also tests the teaching context, adequacy, and isomeric representativeness of European literary texts in the curriculum.

For the needs of the research, a self-determination questionnaire, structured in two parts and accompanied by open and closed type questions, was used. Subsequently, the findings are analyzed, while the correlations and differences between the variables investigated, are identified.

VICTORIAN REALIST TEXTS: CROSSING CULTURAL, TOPOLOGICAL AND CHRONOLOGICAL BOUNDARIES

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In my presentation I will argue that teaching Victorian realist texts allows for an interplay of signification which erases cultural, chronological as well as topological boundaries. In particular, I intend to demonstrate that Victorian realist texts such as Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* (1843) or *Oliver Twist* (1837) function as a Lacanian Mirror in which the present is reflected as an inverted image of the past and vice versa. Creating these temporal and spatial illusions and allusions, Victorian texts, I contend, confront their readers/audiences with cultural and social realities which span time and space and transcend boundaries. Literature, thus, becomes a medium for creating *topoi* of cultural proximity erasing social, temporal and spatial difference. The methodological framework of my analysis will be based on Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic theory and Slavoj Žižek's socio-political adaptations of Lacanian concepts. In the broader context of globalization, I will claim, Literature, in general, and Victorian realist texts, in particular, abridge cultural diversity familiarizing readers with difference as *differance*. In the practice of teaching literature which basically aims to enable us to transcend cultural boundaries, I propose that Victorian realism, even if chronologically alienating, becomes a rather alarming temporal and spatial reflection of the present, especially in its stark, often ominous representation of social reality.

CRUEL NOSTALGIA IN ALI SMITH'S AUTUMN AND GEORGI GOSPODINOV'S TIME SHELTER

Maria **PIPEVA**

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The paper discusses some thematic, narrative and stylistic parallels between two contemporary novels – Ali Smith's *Autumn* (2016) and Georgi Gospodinov's *Time Shelter* (2020) – engaged in apprehending the personal and political crises of the present through the problematization of our engagement with memory and the past.

The central analytical tool is that of “cruel nostalgia”, a term coined by British academic Robert Eaglestone¹ in dialogue with what influential affect theorist Lauren Berlant calls “cruel

¹ Eaglestone, R. “Cruel nostalgia and the memory of the Second World War”. *Brexit and Literature: Critical and Cultural Responses*, R. Eaglestone (Ed.). London and New York: Routledge, 2018, 92-104.

optimism”.² While Berlant’s concept relates to the ways in which unrealistic fixations and fantasies of the *future* compromise the possibilities for meaningful existence in the present, “cruel nostalgia” postulates an equally detrimental attachment to versions of the *past*.

At the heart of both novels under consideration lies the conflict between asserting the centrality of memory to personal and collective identity, and the awareness of the dangers of unreflective memory and nationalistic nostalgia. Both novels are metafictional ruminations about the need for new narrative forms which can effectively counteract both collective amnesia and toxic perpetuations of nostalgic reconstructions of the past.

Since the exploration of the concept of nostalgia and its manifestations transcends disciplinary boundaries, I believe that the proposed topic is pertinent to the concerns of this conference.

SCIENCE FICTION AS A MODE OF INHABITING BOUNDARIES

Alexander **POPOV**

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The paper interprets science fiction (SF) as a mode of praxis, rather than as a formally inscribed genre, as a practice of making worldviews and bringing disciplines together across boundaries. It takes inspiration from Donna Haraway’s view of “SF as a mode of attention, a theory of history, and a practice of worlding” (Haraway) and from meta-philosophical modes such as Alexander Bogdanov’s *tektology* – “a collaborative poetic method of generating theories” (Wark) – and Paul Feyerabend’s epistemological anarchism (Feyerabend). SF is seen simultaneously as this mode of “thickening [contours], diffracting and rendering them iridescent” (Viveiros de Castro) and as the space within which these trans-disciplinary encounters happen. It is a potentially multivalent instrument usable as a pivoting device in both classrooms and research projects, in practice and in theory. To trace the affordances that SF makes possible, the paper introduces a theoretical model originating from science fiction studies – Samuel Delany’s *trivalent discourse* of SF, according to which SF interposes “a third discourse” between “the text” and the “societally extant” encyclopedic representation of the world (Delany). It elaborates on Delany’s triangular model of *text/world/SF-world* by thinking of the specific relations that obtain between these three nodes, conceptualizing them in terms of six narrative “voices,” provisionally termed *history*, *subjectivity*, *science*, *revolution*, *philosophy* and *art*. The model aims to make clear the potential of SF to bring these voices into dialogue, and furthermore, discusses how non-SF literature could also be read in this way.

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² Berlant, L. *Cruel Optimism*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2011.

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THE LIMITS OF PHILOLOGICAL READING: OBSERVATIONS ON THE INTERNAL BOUNDARIES IN THE HUMANITIES

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The paper intends to defend some substantial distinctions between contemporary humanitarian disciplines, which diverge not only in their subject matter but also in terms of their specific aims. The adequacy in principle of the formulation "culture-as-text" should not blind us to the fact that not every text can and should be read in the same way. In particular, this view applies to that mythologized, “liminal” humanitarian territory, called – often sceptically, but most often with awe – “theory”. Are the claims of some theorists interesting as part of the history of ideas; should they be subjected to rational (and thus critical) analysis; and how to do this: the importance of such questions often goes unnoticed, especially when particular theoretical views and constructions become the subject of a *philological* (i.e. classical humanitarian) reading. The major aim of this paper is to shed light on the fact that reading theory as literature does not help especially in the quest for a theoretical understanding of the goals and tasks of any humanitarian discipline. The contemporary tendency within humanitarian studies to appropriate new objects, creating the impression of the absence of any external border, is examined in a critical light. As a recipe against this *reductio ad absurdum*, the paper proposes to make a distinction between modes of readings of humanitarian texts, motivated by the awareness that not only the subject area, but also the methods of humanitarian studies themselves are not and cannot be uniform.

THE EVOLUTION AND INTERACTION OF SIGN SYSTEMS IN THE SEMIOSPHERE (FOR THE GARDEN OF ETERNAL SPRING AND BALL GRAMMAR)

Milena **POPOVA**

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The paper aims to outline some key aspects of the interaction between sign systems in the

semiosphere. Understanding this interaction is a prerequisite for revealing the essence of semiosis and for the adequate interpretation of semiotic messages. The research is carried out in the context of the evolution of linguistic and semiotic theories within the contemporary scientific paradigm. The empirical study puts forward a comparative analysis of some specific verbal and visual sign systems and lays bare the universal and particular characteristics of their functioning. Attention is focused upon the interpretative and epistemological dimensions of semiosis.

EXPLODING THE BOUNDARIES BETWEEN ACTUAL AND VIRTUAL IN ANN RADCLIFFE'S *A SICILIAN ROMANCE* (1790)

Rayna **ROSENOVA**

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One of the fascinating aspects of Gothic literature is how the structure of the typical Gothic narrative textually resembles the intricate and imposing design of Gothic architecture, thus evincing a palpably material aspect: as Gothic architectural space opens and closes upon itself, creating the illusion of infinity, so do Gothic novels create the sense of infinite progression, as they operate on the interlocking of numerous sub-narratives and gaps in meaning that fracture the linearity and unity of the plot. Using this notion as a point of departure, this paper will focus on the actual and virtual worlds that are created in Gothic narratives through the architectural spaces, agentive objects, and unexplained phenomena that are inherent to the Gothic novel. In this light, Elizabeth Grosz has noted that “the virtual is the space of emergence of the new, the unthought, the unrealized, which at every moment loads the presence of the present with supplementarity, redoubling a world through parallel universes, universes that might have been” (*Architecture from the Outside* 77). In order to explore how Gothic narratives explode the boundaries between actual and virtual, and how this disruption creates supplementary spaces to be filled with meaning, this paper will discuss the textual topography of Ann Radcliffe's early Gothic novel *A Sicilian Romance* (1790). It will focus on the material aspects of Radcliffe's narrative to investigate the use of borders, liminalities, and their transgression, which is crucial to the opening of virtual spaces of potential and parallel meaning. It is in these vacancies and the possibilities they create that meaning in Gothic novels is constructed and deconstructed, resulting in a gap in meaning which should be completed by the novel's characters and readers who, in moments of suspension of disbelief, are invited to step into the shoes of their fictional counterparts.

AESTHETIC BORDER CROSSING IN THE WORKS OF VLADIMIR NABOKOV AND VIRGINIA WOOLF

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In his insightful article, entitled “Phototextuality: Photography, Fiction, Criticism,” Ari J. Blatt convincingly argues that the twentieth century has seen a growing scholarly interest in phototextuality, which he describes as a kind of “aesthetic border crossing.” It is a generally accepted fact that the works of modernist and postmodernist authors have explored the relationship between literature and photography and experimented with techniques of how photographic vision can reshape figurative language, modes of writing, and literary style. André Breton’s *Nadja*, George Rosenbach’s *Bruges-la-Mort*, Richard Brautigan’s *Trout Fishing in America*, William H. Gass’s *Willie Masters’ Lonesome Wife*, and several of Donald Barthelme’s short stories are all texts illustrated with photographs; at the same time, it must be noted that several authors of Anglo-American literature adopted photography as a model for literary practice by mimicking the immediacy effects and truth claims of the what used to be considered as the new medium. The present article aims to explore the generic hybrid crossover represented by photographic writing as a means to articulate an array of personal, socio-cultural, and historical concerns; the article will subject to analysis Vladimir Nabokov’s “A Guide to Berlin” and Virginia Woolf’s little-known short story, “Portraits.”

THE SIMULACRUM CLASSROOM: COMPOSITION CLASSES AS A REPRESENTATION OF THEMSELVES

Michael SMITH

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This presentation explores how humanities have become something of a simulacrum of themselves. It will do so by considering the inductive example of the introductory composition class.

Brereton *Origins of Composition Studies* prods the rather bastardized origins of composition departments in the late 19th Century, which is frighteningly relevant today. In short, he writes that employers and other professors claimed students couldn't write, but there was debate as to its importance in the university. The compromise was that colleges adopted what was deemed "introductory composition" classes, which would be branded with second-class status and taught by part-time lecturers rather than senior faculty. Its inception was not about teaching a material but teaching in a *materialism*. This situation is then made worse from the administration side, which from its end receives a constant bombardment from industry that students “can't write.” Yet this demand for higher outcomes is simultaneously met with less funding, less staff, less resources, etc., which all combine to translate introductory composition into something of a performance of a class rather than a class pure and simple.

Composition studies itself becomes increasingly about the *teaching* of composition rather than the topic proper. The class becomes more of a factory of passing students than teaching students – all together turning composition into a simulacrum, a term I use insofar as Baudrillard claimed the simulacrum replaces the real. Here, our classes have been replaced with their representations.

TRANSLATING TRANSGRESSION: TRANSFERRING GARTH GREENWELL'S "BULGARIAN" NOVEL INTO BULGARIAN

Traci **SPEED**

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The act of translation is at once inherently boundary-crossing and potentially transgressive, and this transgressive aspect is at the basis of my proposal to analyze the role of the Bulgarian language in Garth Greenwell's novel *What Belongs to You*, written in English but set in Bulgaria. Greenwell's use of Bulgaria as a setting is a logical result of his years spent teaching in Sofia, and the main character clearly bears a relationship to the author. As an American in Sofia, his protagonist engages in border crossing on a literal level, but as a gay man in Bulgaria, he crosses metaphorical borders in his social transgression. In this, the fact of the protagonist's being a foreigner is not merely incidental, but also plays into his theme of transgression. The foreignness of the setting to the Anglophonic audience is emphasized and echoed by the profusion of untranslated Bulgarian words employed in Greenwell's work, and this will be part of my analysis – how Greenwell achieves estrangement or defamiliarization through Bulgarian vocabulary. The greater part of my analysis, however – part of a larger project on examining the translation of *realia* in our transnational global age – concerns how this deliberate and emphatic defamiliarization through the use of Bulgarian is treated in Nadezhda Radulova's 2016 translation of the novel into Bulgarian, and what happens to the relationship between translation and transgression when the work is brought back home to the original language.

HYPOTHESES, NETWORKS AND BOUNDARIES IN COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

Roumiana L. **STANTCHEVA**

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In the introduction, the article raises the question of the use of hypotheses in Comparative Literature in relation to the metaphorical notion of network comparison. In the context of the possibilities of comparative literary studies and Balkan studies to compare "small" and "large" literatures, the original hypotheses and network comparisons in the works of the Americanist, Prof. Madeleine Danova, are indicated. A case study is analysed in the presentation. It collects in a network comparison the myth of the Creation from the original egg. Romanian and German poetry from the second half of the 20th century are placed next to each other, in which man is imprisoned in the primordial egg. The analysis shows the shift of the myth in relation to publicly acceptable notions of freedom.

THE LANGUAGE OF MASS PROPAGANDA IN BULGARIAN AND AMERICAN NEWSREELS DURING THE COLD WAR

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The paper focuses on the language of newsreels as a powerful tool of mass propaganda during the Cold War. Comparison of Bulgarian and American newsreels showing intrusive similarities and analogies in the audio-visual propaganda on both sides of the "mirror" screen. The purpose is identical: to create a unified and indisputable point of view and assessment of what is happening in the world. No less interesting paper shows about the differences and their possible explanation - here the emphasis is on Bulgarian context.

USES OF LITERATURE IN EDUCATION: TWO FORMS OF FREEDOM

Lubomir **TERZIEV**

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Pushed into the margins by the mighty STEM wave, Literature is not faring very well as an academic discipline at the turn of the third decade of the twenty first century. Two questions seem significant in this context: a) What justifies the presence of Literature in the academic curriculum; b) What would academia lose if Literature were to be removed from the list of subjects studied at university?

My focus in this paper is not so much on the hard and soft skills that the study of literature can cultivate as it is on two forms of freedom it can add to education.

MIGRATION, EKPHRASIS AND BOUNDARY CROSSING

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This paper argues that, in addition to autobiographical narratives, ekphrastic fiction has the power to evoke the migrant's lived experience through metonymic association. Indeed, through ekphrastic narration, fictional writers manage to achieve complex symbolic interconnections within the postcolonial context, and to present us, in an immediate manner, the dangers of crossing real boundaries. I will use the icon picture of Pulitzer Prize winner, Yannis Behrakis as a springboard for examining *Last Thoughts on the Medusa* by Sudanese British writer Jamal Mahjoub and the Prologue to *The Committed* by Vietnamese American and Pulitzer Prize winner Viet Thanh Nguyen. By constructing multimodal texts³ which highlight the visual element in the verbal text, by painting with words the refugees' plight aboard jam-packed boats, both Mahjoub

³ Gunther Kress defines multimodal as "any text whose meanings are realized through more than one semiotic code" (Kress, Gunther and Theo van Leeuwen. *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*. London: Routledge, 1996, p. 177).

and Nguyen engage in exposing the significance of real and symbolic borders in an attempt to reverse the migrants' decrease of their status and to partially recover their personhood.

CROSSING THE DIGITAL BOUNDARIES IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

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The notion of 'digital researcher' encompasses new characteristics of the researcher in the new media such as connectedness, technology-orientedness, interdisciplinarity, visibility. Therefore, the present paper reports some questionnaire-driven results concerning the ability and willingness of social sciences scholars to make efficient use of the new media and technologies. The question posed here is whether these scholars have managed to switch from the traditional media to the new ones, and the results demonstrate that the answer is more likely to be negative.

For the time being, in most of the social sciences, online academic publications still stick to the traditional design known from printing in spite of the fact that many journals offer for their online versions opportunities for the inclusion of other media apart from the written. Scholars still seem reluctant to make use of these opportunities and the common explanation for that is that they are not familiar with these media, that mixing the media is complicated and they are disinclined to yet start learning how to publish in the new environment. This attitude and practices make the publications difficult to grab students' attention, they seem alien to the generation used to different forms of knowledge representation.

Secondly, an investigation of outstanding linguists' websites from English- and German-speaking countries demonstrated that they are often still neglected as a means of personal presentation and professional promotion. This is in contrast with the undeniable fact that greater visibility on the Web is of crucial importance for scholars today as it means fast dissemination of research results and, respectively, feedback in the form of references, citations and the like - the 'publish or perish' axiom pertains no less powerfully to the digital world than to the real one.

POPULAR FICTION AND TRAUMA NOVELS: CROSSED BOUNDARIES

Ingrida-Eglė ŽINDŽIUVIENĖ

Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania

The paper discusses feeble boundaries between popular fiction and trauma novels and the contemporary tendencies of this process of "blending of the genres" and crossed boundaries. The first type, popular fiction, has been often opposed to literary fiction; however, the current global situation of fiction seems to deny this distinct division, favoured much in the past. Trauma fiction as a genre has gained both popularity and critical attention, especially, since the last decade of the 20th century, the reasons for this being (1) its close attachment to historical fiction; (2) the on-going

readers' interest in the past, trying to deal with personal and collective traumas and (3) contemporary global processes. Popular fiction consists of different forms and genres of narrative pleasure, while trauma fiction often describes personal and/or collective traumatic experience of different depth and scope. The article briefly surveys the features of both genres and analyses overlapping of the genres in contemporary fiction. Although the article discusses Victoria Hislop's novels, other examples of contemporary fiction, which represents both popular fiction and trauma fiction, will be mentioned. The article questions contemporary "popularity" of trauma fiction and analyses the factors that have influenced the crossing of boundaries.