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8th STUDENT CONFERENCE 2026

ANGLISTISCHES SEMINAR

19th and 20th June, 2026

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

Concept and Organisation:

MA Students of the English Studies Programme.

Friday, June 19 (Rooms 108, 110 & 112,
Anglistisches Seminar)

9.15–10.45

Welcome

Prof. Dr. Theresa Heyd (Chair of
the Department)

Room 108

Keynote

Yannick Ganz

*“Of scoundrels , puppies, and
womanthropes: Insults in Late
Modern English.”*

10.45–13.15

**Panel 1: Gender and Queerness,
Part 1**

Chair: Noa Dhérissard, p. 1-4

Room 108

**Panel 2: Perspectives on Politics
and Society in Anglophone
Literature**

Chair: Clemens Wickert, p. 5-9

Room 110

**Panel 3: Art and Politics of
Violence, Part 1**

Chair: Defne Yilmaz, p. 10-22

Room 112

13.15–14.15

Lunch Break

14.15–16.15

**Panel 4: Historical Corpus
Linguistics**

Chair: Mylia Frank, p. 23-26
Room 108

**Panel 5: Utopian Visions and
Dystopian Nightmares: Issues of
Language, Nature and
Technology**

**Chair: Lea Sofia Fernández &
Julia Lindner**, p. 27-32
Room 110

**Panel 3: Art and Politics of
Violence, Part 2**

Chair: Defne Yilmaz, p. 10-22
Room 112

16.15–16.30

Coffee/ Tea Break

16.30–18.00

**Panel 6: Conversations
About/Around Disability and
Mental Illness**

Chair: Sam Gaugele, p. 32-36
Room 108

**Panel 7: Language, Power and
Surveillance**

Chair: Colin Chemelle, p. 37-40
Room 110

**Panel 3: Art and Politics of
Violence, Part 3**

Chair: Defne Yilmaz, p. 10-22
Room 112

Saturday, June 20 (Rooms 108, 110 & 112,
Anglistisches Seminar)

9.30–11.00

**Panel 8: “Beauty is Truth, Truth
Beauty: Art, Aesthetics and
Literature”**

Chair: Sijia Huang, p. 40-44
Room 108

Panel 9: Poetry and Song

**Chair: Laura Altenburg & Sören
Melchers**, p. 44-46
Room 110

**Panel 1: Gender and
Queerness, Part 2**

Chair: Noa Dhérissard, p. 1-4
Room 112

11.00–11.15

Coffee/Tea Break

11.15–12.45

**Panel 10: Gone But Not
Forgotten: History and Memory
in Anglophone Literature**

Chair: Helen Scott, p. 47-50
Room 108

**Panel 11: Between Literature and
Cinema: Cross-Disciplinary
Approaches and Case Studies,
Part 1**

Chair: Polina Krylova, p. 50-57
Room 110

**Panel 12: Gaming, Language,
Narrative**

Chair: Alec von der Schulenburg,
p. 57-61
Room 112

12.45–14.00

Lunch Break

14.00–16.00

**Panel 13: Changing the
Narrative: Contemporary
Retellings of Classics, Myths, and
Fairytale**

**Chair: Maria Doering & T
Klefisch**, p. 61-65
Room 108

**Panel 11: Between Literature and
Cinema: Cross-Disciplinary
Approaches and Case Studies,
Part 2**

Chair: Polina Krylova, p. 50-57
Room 110

Panel 14: Forensic Linguistics

Chair: Polina Kuznetcova, p.

65-68

Room 112

16.00–16.15

Coffee/ Tea Break

16.15–17.15

**Panel 15: Against the Clock and
Off the Map: Temporal and
Spatial Reconfigurations in
Fiction**

Chair: Andra Flatter, p. 69-71

Room 108

Haiku Workshop

hosted by Sören Melchers, p.

46

17.15–18.00

Closing Discussion

Panel 1: Gender and Queerness

Chair: Noa Dhérissard

Constructing and Curating Identity: A Study of Queer Women's Linguistic Creativity and Membership Categorization on Chinese Social Media

Sijia Huang

Although the Chinese Psychiatric Association officially removed homosexuality from the Chinese Classification of Mental Disorders Version 3 (CCMD-3) in 2001, homosexuality and bisexuality still appear under the section on psychosexual and behavioral disorders and are categorized as “sexual orientation disorders.” On May 15, 2023, the Beijing LGBT Center, one of the largest queer advocacy organizations in mainland China, was shut down due to a “force majeure,” which reflects the increasingly restrictive conditions surrounding queer visibility and expression in the Chinese context. Meanwhile, online social media has created a digital platform for queer people to engage in self-expression and mutual support, on which they employ their linguistic creativity to evade censorship, cultivate belongingness, and negotiate and assert queer space under the predominantly cisgender, heterosexual, and allosexual normativity.

This study focuses on how queer women's linguistic creativity on Chinese social media constructs community membership and identity under conditions of censorship and heteronormative regulation.

By using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Membership Categorization Analysis (MCA), this project investigates queer women's linguistic practices, including identity labels, coded expressions, and boundary-making discourses on Bilibili, a Chinese online video sharing platform. Chinese queer women's linguistic creativity and expressions function not only as strategies for coming out, expressing queer desire, resisting homophobic hostility, and introducing informative facts, but also as mechanisms for curating ideal identity and building desirable queer community. While these practices facilitate community belongingness and minority empowerment under censorship, they may simultaneously reproduce exclusionary norms and standards that cause subtle internal marginalization and reveal tensions between resistance to dominant normativity and the pursuit of inclusivity within queer women communities.

“You Are What You Eat”: Food, Femininity, and the Performance of Identity on *TikTok*

Nicole Quy

Within *TikTok*'s rapidly evolving ecosystem, participation in trends via novel and concise linguistic labels has become a key means of identity construction and performance. While social media has long been recognised as a site of self-presentation, *TikTok* uniquely fosters hyperniche identity markers such as *clean girl* and *rockstar girlfriend*: labels defined by specificity, temporality, and performativity. These descriptors condense entire lifestyles into recognisable personae, which users reproduce through coordinated aesthetic and linguistic cues.

Within this phenomenon, food plays a particularly prominent role, especially amongst women. This may not come as a complete surprise, for the connection between food and femininity is no doubt longstanding, shaped by cultural expectations surrounding domesticity, restraint, indulgence, and, contextualised by the body. On *TikTok*, however, food functions not simply as something women consume or prepare, but also as a shorthand for identity itself. Through labels such as *granola girl*, *matcha girl*, *vanilla girl*, and terms like *girl dinner*, users employ food-related language to index entire lifestyles and construct affective personas.

This study examines how such food-based identity markers are constructed, circulated, and interpreted by women online, focusing on the multimodal mechanisms that make these labels intelligible and meaningful. Using a small corpus of videos, captions, and comments, it combines quantitative and qualitative analysis to explore how food terms shift from neutral nouns into affective identity markers, and in doing so illuminates the propensity of such trends to flatten women's identity into curated, often consumer-oriented categories, raising the question to what extent binding oneself to specific food items or attitudes can be deemed 'a bit of fun', and to what extent it reinforces restrictive, marketable versions of femininity that reduce self-expression to objectification and commercially legible 'types'.

Search for Belonging: Khwaja Siras, Sufi Traditions, and Religious Legitimacy

Hiba Khan

This paper investigates the complex socio-religious landscape of Pakistan's Khwaja Sira community, exploring the intersection of gender non-conformity, Sufi mysticism, and the construction of queer Muslim heritage. Despite a historical legacy of prestige during the Mughal era, contemporary Khwaja Siras face systemic marginalization, pervasive violence, and institutional barriers that obstruct their basic civil rights. Through an interdisciplinary lens incorporating queer theory and transgender studies, this study analyzes how Khwaja Siras strategically navigate these hostilities by seeking moral and religious legitimacy within the sacred geography of Sufi shrines. Drawing on secondary research and ethnographic accounts, the analysis demonstrates how the community appropriates Sufi theological frameworks such as the concepts of *nafs* (ego/self), *ruh* (soul), and *barzakh* (liminality) to articulate a spiritual gender identity that transcends biological binaries. While these shrines function as 'safe havens' offering unique spaces for ritual participation and social recognition, this paper argues that this inclusion remains spatially bound and conditional. Outside the shrine's precincts, the legitimacy granted through devotional practices like *dhamaal* (a rhythmic dance) fails to translate into legal protection or broader societal acceptance, particularly in the face of recent judicial rollbacks of transgender rights. Ultimately, this research posits that the enduring presence of Khwaja Siras within Sufi landscapes constitutes a vital yet overlooked form of queer heritage, challenging rigid interpretations of Islam and highlighting a historical pattern of diverse gender expression in South Asian religious life.

Panel 2: Perspectives on Politics and Society in Anglophone Literature

Chair: Clemens Wickert

The Political as (Not) Unconscious: Interpreting Dur e Aziz Amna's *A Splintering* as a Socially Symbolic Act

Ayesha Khalid

Military coups, refugee crises, protest campaigns and political assassinations—contemporary Pakistani Anglophone literature depicts the socio-political issues of Pakistan, as the “country’s pivotal position in the so-called War on Terror” (Bilal 2016, 1) has pushed it to global prominence. With the backdrop of the country’s tumultuous political landscape, any discourse or writing regarding the nation, whether fictional or non-fictional, requires a partisan perspective. Over the years, there has been a significant scholarly focus on the development and trajectory of Pakistani English fiction writers’ frequent articulation of their political stances on both internal and foreign issues, both implicitly and explicitly. In lieu of this, this paper contends that *A Splintering* by Dur e Aziz Amna serves as a symbolic representation of Pakistan’s political turmoil. The novel incorporates the political into the personal as it follows the protagonist Tara’s story over the span of three decades (1980s to 2000s) while simultaneously constructing a political history of Pakistan. Using Fredric Jameson’s concept of interpreting all literature with “the doctrine of a political unconscious” (Jameson 1981, 4), this study utilises the three horizons of political, social and historical to employ Tara as a site of historical mediation.

Analysing literature as a cultural practice facilitates comprehension of a world of diverse and intermingled communities and their “debates about meaning, identity, representation, and agency” (Culler 1997, 43). Read through the lens of political currency, *A Splintering* shows how the intermeshed structures of class, gender and politics remain largely inescapable, systematically marginalising women and thus relegating them to the periphery of power.

Works Cited

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Pragmatism’s Truth: Confronting Hope and Its Power

Christopher Wilson Martinez

“Our culture is the predominance of an idea which draws after it this train of cities and institutions.”—Emerson, “Circles”

Western society and philosophy have long concerned themselves with formulating and theorizing ideal worlds to live in, yet throughout history—from ancient times to the present—there has been no one truth to fully liberate thinkers from the shackles that keep them producing “newer” strategies. It is thus that we have a drawing of circle upon circle over each novel idea that precedes the next—and evermore. This is called ‘progress.’ As a consequence of this, one should ask, ‘what is progress?’ And still, by contemplating and attempting to answer this riddle the inquirer will find themselves contributing to the accumulating pile of perceived advancement. What then? Richard Rorty tells us to ‘replace knowledge with hope’ and Cornel West implores us to ‘evade philosophy.’ Both these thinkers, pragmatists, utilizing Emersonian thought, appear to break free from the chain of ideas which comes before us. It is not worthwhile asking, ‘do they?’, but rather, ‘how do they?’ This work will explore the hidden compartments and intricacies of pragmatism—its roots in western thought, Emerson, continental philosophy, language, and most importantly its confrontation with hope as it is found in the early western works of Hesiod and Aeschylus. It becomes obvious then that pragmatism does not escape the predominance of an idea which draws after it this train of cities and institutions, rather, it faces it head on, recognizing what can be done and what cannot be done with its power.

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A “great image of authority”: The Construction(s) of Political Power in William Shakespeare’s *King Lear*

Clemens Wickert

Political scientist Franz Neumann is convinced that no society in recorded history—from the dawn of democracy in ancient Greece over the great monarchies of medieval Europe to our contemporary global order—“has ever been able to dispense with political power” (167). If this assertion is correct and political power is indeed a socio-historical constant, then it seems reasonable, in order to gain a deeper understanding of power dynamics, to carefully consider what the greater minds of times long gone had to say on the subject. Undoubtedly, England’s most famous poet belongs to this distinguished circle and although Elizabeth Frazer is certainly right when she states that William Shakespeare “was not a systematic political thinker” (10), the political wisdom entailed in his works seems to be both remarkably rich and surprisingly timeless. It is in *King Lear*, a play whose action is heavily shaped by the political considerations of its characters, that the Bard critically reflects on early modern political thought.

However, the play which A. C. Bradley refers to as “Shakespeare’s greatest work” (248) may not only be read as a careful examination of King James I’s conception of monarchical sovereignty but also as providing a more abstract perspective on the exercise of political power, which, arguably, has lost nothing of its significance. Ultimately, as this talk suggests, William Shakespeare’s *King Lear* may readily be considered a highly valuable read for anyone interested in the dynamics of politics and power on the one hand, but also, and perhaps especially, for the political leaders of the present.

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Panel 3: Art and Politics of Violence

Chair: Defne Yilmaz

The Raging of the Earth – Intersecting Fanon’s and Lorde’s Analysis of Emotions

Jonas Walter

As the mother of postcolonial feminism, Audre Lorde is many things. Born in 1934 to Caribbean immigrants in New York, she is a “Black woman warrior poet” (1984, p. 30), lesbian, cancer survivor, socialist, feminist and theorist, though she herself would reject the latter. Instead of theory, she proposes poetry: “[T]here are no new ideas. There are only new ways of making them felt” (ibid., p. 29).

One could argue that one of the ideas Lorde is trying to make felt is one proposed by Frantz Fanon. His psychoanalysis of the oppressor and oppressed, colonist and colonized, is an argument that is often used up to this day. Anger as a consequence of but also tool against oppression can be found all throughout postcolonial and feminist theory.

Anger is not the only emotion that is woven into Lorde’s and Fanon’s work, though. Fanon interconnects fear, envy, guilt and anger within the oppressor/oppressed pair. He also goes on to extend this idea to mental health disorders and how they come about, attempting to give examples to a process of pathologization forced upon the oppressed subject.

Lorde herself talks about breaking the silence and about embracing differences in close connection to emotionality and how they interlink with pain and suffering, rage and fury, as well as guilt and her ‘Power of the Erotic’.

Being a breast cancer survivor herself, she also brings in notions of health and survival that are important when talking about the intersectional oppression she expects us to confront.

In this paper, I explore Lorde and Fanon's emotional world-building, analyze how Lorde builds upon, criticizes and expands Fanon's emotionality of the oppressed, and compare their different views on agency, emotionality, reformists, rape and truth-telling.

All of Us in Hell: Negotiating Violence in Nityan Unnikrishnan's painting series *All of Us* (2025) at the Kochi-Muziris Biennale 2025–26

Sydney Noemi Stein

Two pregnant women softly caress their bellies in a house destroyed by missiles, cement walls scream of “White Lies”, and sunbathers sip cocktails on the beach while a war scene breaks out. Nityan Unnikrishnan's painting series *All of Us* (2025), on view at the Kochi-Muziris Biennale 2025–26, demands the spectator to interrogate their morality and resilience when witnessing violence.

Unnikrishnan's tableaux seemingly quote Hieronymus Bosch's hellscapes and Mughal miniature painting. *Reel* and *Hymns of Drowning* appropriate a Dantean interpretation of a carnival, where joy and despair oscillate. While Unnikrishnan's work has primarily been analyzed through the lens of Foucault's heterotopia, this panel goes further. Departing from Walter Benjamin's notion of the “dialectical image” and Stoichiță's “self-aware image” (2015 [1993]), and questioning morality through Western and Hindu traditions,

this talk explores how societal critique is achieved through Hindu iconography and contemporary political imagery. Displayed in Pepper House, a former colonial warehouse, and prefaced by Maria Hassabi's installation of gold mirrors titled *Passage No. 2* (2023), the exhibition is analyzed via a context analysis (Sachs, 2025) to foster a discussion on its societal relevance.

Unnikrishnan's paintings also serve as a vessel to the spectator's morality when consuming a constant overlap of violence and entertainment on social media. Based on a transcultural analysis of Nityan Unnikrishnan's painting series *All of Us*, this talk seeks to foster a discussion about how humans negotiate violence through empathy, resilience and resistance.

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Fascism-maxxing: Benjamin, Visconti, Clavicular

Fernando Oliveira-Mussmann

“The logical result of Fascism is the introduction of aesthetics into political life,” writes Walter Benjamin in his seminal 1935/36 essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. But what does it mean to aestheticize the political? Why does Benjamin draw the connection between fascism and aesthetics? This paper offers a close reading of Benjamin’s argument by examining its manifestation in Luchino Visconti’s 1969 film *The Damned*. The film serves as a rich cinematic case study through which Benjamin’s theoretical framework can be read. This will be done by examining the historical context of *The Damned*, situating the film within both the political history of the Third Reich and the aesthetic tradition of European art cinema. Secondly, Benjamin’s argument is outlined. Thirdly, these theoretical coordinates are applied to Visconti’s film, revealing how the director both depicts and critically reflects upon the fascist aestheticization of power, desire, and destruction. The paper concludes by arguing that Benjamin’s diagnosis retains its relevance today. Contemporary social media phenomena such as *looksmaxxing*, in which self-optimization is pursued with quasi-political urgency and collective ritual, suggest that the logic Benjamin identified has migrated into new cultural forms.

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Polluting Bodies: Otherisation, Purity and the Politics of Shame in War

Bade Ryustemova

This paper examines how sexual violence in contexts of war and genocide transforms women’s bodies into sites of symbolic contamination, reshaping their position within their own communities. While wartime rape is often understood as an instrument of domination, its power extends beyond the act itself: it mobilizes cultural notions of purity, honour, and communal identity, producing lasting structures of shame and exclusion.

The violated body comes to represent the fragility of the social and moral order itself. Focusing on the experiences of Yazidi women under ISIS, and particularly on *The Girl Who Escaped ISIS* (2016) by Farida Khalaf, the paper argues that sexual violence operates as a form of symbolic boundary violation. Drawing on Mary Douglas's concept of pollution as "matter out of place" and Julia Kristeva's theory of abjection, it shows how survivors are positioned as liminal figures. At the same time, the paper contends that survivor testimony can act as a form of counter-structure. Through public narration, Khalaf renegotiates the meanings imposed on her body, transforming it from a site of 'pollution' into one of agency and resistance. In this sense, narrative becomes a critical space in which symbolic orders are both reproduced and contested.

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From Witch to ‘Bitch’: Rearticulating Early Modern Misogyny in Contemporary Digital Culture

Konstantina Chalkiopoulos

This project examines how misogynistic ideas about women, formulated in early modern Europe, continue to shape contemporary gender discourse. It focuses on influential demonological texts such as the *Malleus Maleficarum* and the *Daemonologie* by James VI and I, which constructed women as morally weak, sexually dangerous, and susceptible to corruption. These works framed the figure of the ‘witch’ as a threat to social and religious order, embedding deeply gendered fears into cultural narratives. I want to argue that, while belief in witchcraft has largely disappeared, the underlying stereotypes have not. Instead, they have been reshaped and rearticulated within modern digital environments, particularly in online ‘manosphere’ communities. Through a comparative discourse analysis, the project traces how recurring themes—such as distrust of female agency, anxieties about sexuality, and the portrayal of women as socially destabilizing—persist across time. By examining this continuity, I want to highlight how historical forms of misogyny are not simply relics of the past but remain active, adapting to new social and technological contexts.

Ultimately, it seeks to show that contemporary gender hostility draws on long-standing cultural scripts rather than emerging in isolation.

How to Survive in the Memory of People's Republic: Gender, State Violence, and the Memory of Women Soldiers in 1950s Xinjiang

Beier Lu

In the early 1950s, thousands of young women from Hunan and Shandong were recruited to join the military and travel to Xinjiang under slogans promising frontier construction, employment, and educational opportunities. After months of arduous travel, however, many of them were met with arranged and coercive marriages organized by the military authorities, through which they were expected to establish families with male veterans. Since the 2000s, a number of interview collections and documentary-literary works have revisited these women's experiences through oral histories and literary reconstruction. This paper takes *Western Women's Stories: Oral Histories of the Life Trajectories of Female Soldiers Sent to Xinjiang* (《西部女人事情：赴新疆女兵人生命运故事口述实录》, 2001) as its primary historical and artistic source in order to examine how documentary literature and interview-based works represent private emotions and memory. It explores how these women soldiers employ the official value system and state-sanctioned gender norms as expressive frameworks through which their life experiences—including the alleviation of suffering and the search for meaning in life—can become speakable and memorable.

At the same time, the paper argues that under the violence and pressure exerted by official institutions, the fragmented and discontinuous elements that drift beyond the central narrative reveal how women's experiences and narratives preserve their force precisely by remaining scattered and resistant to incorporation into dominant historical discourse, thereby safeguarding private memory.

Furthermore, by analyzing the literary reconstruction and re-narration of these oral histories, the paper investigates how such unassimilated personal memories, once brought into the public sphere, gain visibility and emotional resonance while simultaneously becoming further absorbed into official ideological frameworks. In this process, violence is amplified through artistic representation, and a dynamic tension emerges between personal memory and collective memory across time.

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Crayons Against Bombs: Literary and Artistic Expression from Children in Gaza

Laura Faria Porto Borges

Amid the ongoing destruction and mass displacement in Gaza, the Palestinian writer Hani al-Salmi and the artist Hanaa Ahmad initiated a series of literary and artistic workshops with children living in displacement camps. The outcome of this collaboration is the 2025 volume *I Will Not Write Poetry and Other Texts*, a collection of short narratives and poems authored by children in Gaza. These texts are accompanied by illustrations produced by children affiliated with the Rummaneh Library in Hebron and the Al-Hamawi center in Jerusalem, creating a layered dialogue between writing and visual interpretation across geographically and

politically fragmented spaces.

This paper proposes an analysis of how experiences of war, displacement, and structural violence are articulated through these intertwined literary and visual forms. The children's texts engage recurrent themes such as hunger, fear, loss, hope, and attachment, while the illustrations both echo and reframe these narratives, at times reinforcing and at others complicating their affective and political dimensions. Rather than approaching these works solely as testimonial or documentary, the paper examines them as aesthetic practices that negotiate the conditions of violence through imagination, symbolism, and narrative experimentation.

By situating the volume within broader discussions on art, politics, and violence, the paper asks how collaborative creative processes can function as forms of expression under conditions of extreme constraint. It further considers the ethical and methodological implications of reading children's artistic production in contexts of conflict, questioning how agency, representation, and mediation are constructed within and through these works.

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From Guernika to Gaza: The Role of Art in Breaking the Endless Cycle of Violence

Samuel Metz

Almost 90 years ago, on 26th April 1937, the Nazi German air force, the 'Luftwaffe,' accompanied by warplanes from fascist Italy, bombed the small Basque town Guernica to assist the Spanish general Francisco Franco in his aim to achieve victory in the Spanish Civil War, which at the time had been going on for almost one year. Beyond the motive of assisting Franco, the Germans viewed their bombings, which killed around 25% of Guernica's population and destroyed 85% of the town's buildings, as a military experiment, preparing them for their planned invasions of neighboring European countries such as France and Poland, which would later lead into the outbreak of World War II.

The large-scale bombing of Guernica and its civilian population had been unprecedented at the time and revealed to the world's people the horrors of war, like hardly any other event. One of the many people disturbed by the inhuman cruelty witnessed in Guernica, was the Spanish painter Pablo Picasso. In the very same year (1937) he created a painting with the title *Guernica*, which would become a worldwide-known symbol of the pain and absurdity of war. The central element of the surrealist painting, exhibited today in the Museum Reina Sofia in Madrid, is the *madre con niño muerto* (mother with dead child), which illustrates the unbearable suffering inevitably felt by surviving dependents of victims of war and destruction. 90 years on from the unveiling of Picasso's *Guernica*, war and terror, as well as the pain and suffering caused by it, still has not disappeared from the face of the earth.

What at Picasso's time had been the Basque town of Guernica, is in modern times Gaza or Ukraine -- a testimony of humanity's tendency to self-destruction. While military technology advanced throughout the decades, the human mind apparently did not. Since the start of the Israeli invasion of Gaza in 2023 more than 70,000 Palestinian civilians have been killed by the so-called Israeli Defence Forces, among them many children. These crimes against humanity, televised in real-time on screens all around the globe, lead people from everywhere to break their silence and speak up against the Israeli warmongers or their own complicit governments -- everyone in their own manner: Journalists through articles or documentations, university students through protests and boycotts and finally artists through the voice of music, or, like Picasso, through painting. In March 2025, the special exhibition *Madre del Guernika* (Mother of Guernika) showed the reinterpretations of contemporary Spanish artists of Picass's anti-war painting, right in front of the Museum Reina Sofía, where the original is kept. No doubt, this can be viewed as an exemplary act of solidarity, but can art really effectively help to end the endless cycle of war, terror and violence?

Panel 4: Historical Corpus Linguistics

Chair: Mylia Frank

Filled Pauses as Discourse Markers in Written Online Discourse

Kathrin Schneider

Several studies demonstrate that filled pauses serve as discourse markers in written contexts and thus fulfill pragmatic functions (e.g. Rehbein 2015; König 2020). These studies also show differences between different forms of filled pauses in terms of their functions. While previous studies compared filled pauses in spoken vs. written discourse and focused on direct messages or Twitter posts (cf. Carrasco et al. 2025 for Dutch and Spanish; Rehbein 2015 for German), the present study investigates different forms of filled pauses in blog comments extracted from the DWDS blog corpus. The aim of the present paper is to compare different forms of filled pauses and investigate whether they differ in their pragmatic functions. Four different forms of filled pauses in German, *äh*, *öh*, *ähm*, and *öhm*, were annotated for seven different pragmatic functions, namely attenuation, disagreement, irritation, humor, uncertainty, surprise, and embarrassment (categories partially adapted from Rehbein 2015 and Carrasco et al. 2025). Data were analyzed qualitatively, providing an overview of how each pragmatic function was expressed by filled pauses. Following this, data were analyzed quantitatively, revealing some tendencies about distributional patterns. Results showed that across forms, the main function was adding a humorous layer. Differences between forms were found, showing that for the ä-type forms the prominent function was humor, whereas for the ö-type forms the main function was expressing irritation. Overall, the findings suggest that the four investigated forms should be viewed as individual discourse markers which are used for different purposes.

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Spelling and the Road to Standardisation in Early Modern English

Caitlin Single

Why is it *debt* and not *dette*? Why are *meet* and *meat* spelt differently, despite sounding the same? English spelling can seem quite arbitrary for native and non-native speakers alike. This has been noted time and time again as early as the sixteenth century. As John Hart laments: “[there is] such confusion and disorder, as it may be accounted rather a kind of ciphering” (Hart 1569, Folio 2 in Crystal 2012: 58). Learners of English might find English confusing nowadays but wait until you see the various ways you could really spell anything in the Early Modern English period. This talk gives an overview of the most prevalent spelling differences and most fascinating changes during the aforementioned time and of how the process of standardisation helped to bring forth the English that we use today.

William Shakespeare's writing will serve as the main focus of analysis to demonstrate larger linguistic developments. These will be further substantiated by taking a look at the Early English Books Online corpus. This talk will hopefully provide useful tips for BA students who might be dipping their toes into the big pond of historical linguistics.

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Grammaticalization in Asynchronous Steps: The Curious Case of the Quantifying Pseudo-Partitives *a lot of* and *Co*.

Mylia Frank

This study began with an observation of variation. Consider these examples: "a variety of circumstances has prevented [...]", "a variety of rumors are afloat [...]." Even though the grammatical number of "a variety of NOUN" changes, both of these examples from the Corpus of Historical American English (COHA) are grammatical in contemporary English. Using other nouns in this "a N₁ of N₂" construction, which Van Eynde & Kim (2022) coin a "pseudo-partitive," is not possible: "a lot of people are talking" cannot be changed to "*a lot of people is talking." A diachronic corpus analysis, this study investigates the process of grammaticalization, or rather constructionalization (Fried 2013), that changes the syntactic structure and, most importantly, the

headedness of the phrase from the N_1 as head (“type A”), functionally a NP, to N_2 as head (“type B”) (Van Eynde & Kim 2022). Type A constructions emerge from nouns denoting quantities (e.g. *handful, ton*), while type B constructions develop from frequent type A constructions. The amount of variation between types A and B differs greatly depending on the noun (*lot, number, series, couple...*) placed into the slot inside of the schematic construction, the “ N_1 .” The formation of a type B construction usually occurs about 30–50 years after frequency increases in the corresponding type A construction and often brings about semantic change in the N_1 . Compared to simple single-word quantifiers, the paradigmatic flexibility of pseudo-partitive constructions leads to semantic and pragmatic flexibility, which is likely a contributing factor to their formation. An additional analysis of the free adjuncts *a lot*, *a ton*, and *a bunch*, as in “the boy eats a ton,” indicates that free adjunct use of a pseudo-partitive does not develop after the full grammaticalization of a type B construction, but alongside it.

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Panel 5: Utopian Visions and Dystopian Nightmares: Issues of Language, Nature and Technology

Chair: Lea Sofia Fernández & Julia Lindner

Writing about Nature for Popular Audiences: Concessions to the Reader in Thoreau's *Walden* (1854)

Julia Lindner

With the steady increase of weather and climate extremes as a direct result of human-made climate change and the consequent extinction of numerous forms of non-human life at stake, our fraught relation to what we call 'nature' is one of the most pressing issues of our times. Ecocritics and environmentalists at large agree that if we want to achieve an ethical relation with our environment, we must first learn to think about it in a way that does not diminish it but instead represents it on its own terms. One of the most fundamental assumptions of ecocriticism is that literature can take part in this process, and many activists now turn to art to communicate their goals as well.

Walden (1854), Henry David Thoreau's semi-fictional report of two years spent in a log cabin near Walden Pond, is one of the most canonical environmentalist texts, and its innovative depiction of a relation to nature continues to inspire environmentalist action centuries later. Despite its palpable influence on reality, however, it is often criticized for catering to the audience too much and thereby compromising Thoreau's "*extra-vagant*"¹ understanding of nature.

In this talk I seek to explore this tension, which is central to contemporary environmentalism and which seems to shape utopian writing at large: How can a text challenge familiar ways of thinking and imagine a future beyond what we know without alienating the reader entirely? To do so, I am going to analyze the relation between reader, speaker and nature as they develop throughout *Walden*, drawing both on eco-narratological tools and Lawrence Buell's influential reading of the book² as gradually developing from homocentrism towards an imperfect but compelling biocentrism.

¹ Thoreau, Henry David. *Walden, Civil Disobedience, and Other Writings: Authoritative Texts, Journal, Reviews and Posthumous Assessments, Criticism*, edited by William John Rossi, 3rd ed, W.W. Norton, 2008. A Norton Critical Edition, p. 218.

² Buell, Lawrence. *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture*. Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996.

Ecofeminist Perspectives in Sarah Scott's *Millenium Hall* (1762) and Octavia E. Butler's *Parable of the Sower* (1993)

Lea Sofia Fernández

Sarah Scott's *A Description of Millenium Hall* (1762) is widely acknowledged as one of the first feminist utopias. The novel centres on an all-female community free from male control and founded on virtue, co-operation, and benevolence. As the recounting of their past experiences reveal, the founders share a history of financial hardship and social exploitation. At Millenium Hall, women are free to create a social order based on education, artistical expression, and

charity. Although this utopia predates modern ecological thought, it recognises humanity's role not "as a merciless destroyer; but the preserver"¹ of nature and wildlife. In observing the "systematic relationship between the subjugation of women and the exploitation of nature by capitalist patriarchy"², Scott anticipates the argument of modern ecofeminism and offers an alternative social system based on sustainability and mutual support rather than oppression and hierarchy.

Like many writers of dystopian literature, Octavia E. Butler sets the protagonist of her novel *Parable of the Sower* (1993) in an apocalyptic landscape shaped by chaos, environmental destruction, and economic inequality. As the fragile security of her family's compound gradually falls apart, Lauren becomes increasingly aware of the fact that there is no return to society's former prosperity and embraces change and adaptability as her guiding principles. Lauren sets out on a journey northward, ultimately leading her to the creation of a new community founded on the principles of her own religious philosophy, "Earthseed". Butler's novel emphasises that ecological injustice is inseparable from issues of class, race, and gender.

Approaching both texts from an ecofeminist perspective, this presentation asks: how do Scott's and Butler's visions shape our understanding of the interconnectedness between nature, feminism, and broader social inequalities? What alternative social systems do they propose in response to the conditions of their respective historical reality? And what warnings do they issue?

¹Scott, Sarah. 1762. *A Description of Millenium Hall*. Broadview Press.

²Tüzün, Hatice Övgü. 2021. “An Ecofeminist Reading of Octavia Butler’s *Parable of the Sower* and *Parable of the Talents*.” In *Dystopias and Utopias on Earth and Beyond: Feminist Ecocriticism of Science Fiction*, edited by Douglas A. Vakoch. Routledge.

Embodied Power Structures – The Stabilising Forces of *Brave New World*’s (1932) Social System

David Orth

“Community, Identity, Stability” – this is the motto of the future World State, in which the story of Aldous Huxley’s dystopian novel *Brave New World* (1932) is set. The World State, which Huxley would describe as “the welfare-tyranny of Utopia”, is a satirical depiction of the ideal transhuman society, where the stabilisation of society through scientific and technological means is valued higher than the human individual. Stability of the World State is maintained by a caste system, which is implemented through eugenics, physical and psychological conditioning, as well as state-imposed drug use. These practices are the foundation for the quite literal embodiment of the World State’s power structures, which keep its inhabitants from experiencing any major adversities but also dictate every aspect of their lives. The ethical implications of these practices, the internal conflicts of characters shown throughout the story, and the fact that there are societies existing outside the World State are evidence that this system is by no means flawless, leading to the following questions:

What exactly are the stabilising forces and mechanisms that have maintained the World State's overall success despite its flaws? 2. Is the institution of the World State as stable as it presents itself?

In an attempt to answer these questions, Michel Foucault's theories on power relations are used in this paper as a means to analyse interactions and relations between individual characters, relations between the state and its inhabitants, and the practices used by the state to enforce the caste system, aiming to highlight where and when different kinds of power take effect and what the resulting consequences are.

Artificial Intelligence, Humanity and Class in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun* (2021)

Lena Meyer

The rise of AI in recent years is a controversial topic that divides society. Literary dystopias offer authors a way to engage critically with this controversy, allowing them to imagine the social consequences of technological advancements. Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun* (2021) presents a dystopian vision in which Artificial Intelligence is closely tied to social hierarchy, inequality and the question of what it means to be human. In the future, some children are genetically 'lifted' for enhanced academic ability, while others face discrimination for not being 'lifted'. Artificial Friends (AFs), like Klara, are sold as companions to 'lifted' children who are raised in social isolation and whose parents can afford one. Klara, as an artificial being, often demonstrates qualities such as empathy, care and moral commitment, while the human characters around her frequently appear emotionally distant.

This contrast blurs the lines between humans and technology, raising the question of what shapes human identity. Through its portrayal of AIs and the social structures surrounding them, the novel highlights how technological progress can coexist with and even intensify existing inequalities. In this presentation, I argue that Ishiguro presents Artificial Intelligence not as a neutral innovation but as a tool that reinforces class divisions and reshapes what counts as ‘human’.

Panel 6: Conversations About/ Around Disability and Mental Illness

Chair: Sam Gaugele

Gen Y Fiction and the Representation of Trauma: Mental Illness, Authenticity and Accountability in Jen Beagin’s *Big Swiss* (2023) and Ottessa Moshfegh’s *My Year of Rest and Relaxation* (2018)

Roxane Schwanke

Trauma studies explore the impact of trauma in literature and society by drawing from other disciplines like psychoanalysis, structuralism, postcolonial studies and many others. It first developed in the 1990s and relied on Freudian theory but has developed drastically ever since then. In recent years, there has emerged a new way writers approach the representation of trauma in fiction. A generation of authors, growing up in an environment in which speaking about mental illness and trauma was a taboo, experienced a changing mentality concerning mental health as both a cause and a symptom of the digital revolution and the massive expansion of social media.

Seeing a younger generation break the unspeakability of mental suffering, they produce fiction that embraces but also questions the extent to which mental awareness is normalised and required in the modern society. The authors are not afraid to include sensitive topics anymore. On the contrary, much of the Gen Y fiction is defined by focusing solely on these issues. This presentation analyses two novels to show how established features of trauma studies are challenged: Jen Beagin's *Big Swiss* (2023) as the main part of the analysis and Ottessa Moshfegh's *My Year of Rest and Relaxation* (2018) as a comparative novel. These books deal with different ways of experiencing, realising and processing trauma. Their characters show how time and even space can be experienced differently for people with mental illnesses and in which ways that excludes and even ostracises them from society. Characterised by a reflective self-awareness, the novels present mental illness and trauma from a new perspective. By analysing them with the help of interdisciplinary frames, the presentation seeks to find answers to the following questions: in an environment that demands authenticity, how is trauma expressed authentically, both as someone suffering from it as well as writing about it? Is there a right way of representing trauma in fiction and is that representation necessarily ethical in its responsibility?

Establishing Common Ground in R/Disability Comments on Ableism

Faina Krasnopolska

Disabled people constantly have to navigate structural ableism – “stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, and social oppression towards” disabled people (Bogart & Dunn, 2019: 651).

It can be difficult to recognise or respond to ableism, so they might look for resources in online communities like r/disability. There, they can share experiences and seek opinions regarding potentially ableist situations. Therefore, the threads, as authentic disability-centred spaces, provide well-suited materials for exploring discourses on ableism – the main themes, concerns, and community-specific pragmatic patterns.

This study looks at 315 ableism-themed comments in ten r/disability threads from 2023 to 2026. The central aim is to explore how the community establish common ground – potentially shared knowledge between communicative partners – on ableism as a concept (Geurts, 2019: 16). Specifically, I will explore what underlying assumptions define ableism as well as their variability. Then, I will analyse the strategies of common ground establishment and their functions in the discourse. Finally, I will discuss the community's ways of handling ableism.

The conceptualisations of ableism are collected in the comments through shared experiences and opinions. The relevant aspects are established through making assumptions about the reported incidents and the reasonings of the people involved. Their appropriateness is then evaluated, although the mechanisms are situation-dependent. Delimiting ableism seems to be the most challenging task: the boundaries are constructed with the help of sociopragmatic factors like context, speaker, and intention. Another part of the common ground are the management strategies that are as diverse as the community itself.

Overall, the data shows that ableism greatly impacts disabled people emotionally and physically. It also demonstrates how strongly ableist ideologies are engrained in language, and therefore, this topic should be studied more to make the world more inclusive.

Keywords: disability, ableism, common ground, pragmatics, conceptualisations.

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“In a different time zone:” A Linguistic Case Study on Trans* Crip[1] Time.

Sam Gaugele

Content note: This talk will mention assisted death and suicidality.

There is the expectation that time works the same way for most of us. The normative idea is that people wake up in the morning, have breakfast, go to work, have lunch at noon, work again, and then go back home in the evening. In an ‘on-record’ life span, people will go to school, then go to university before entering the workforce. They will get married, have kids, then grandkids, and then die at an old age. All these societal expectations around time can be summarized under the term chrononormativity.

[1] Reappropriated term from ableist slur.

However, for a great number of people, time works quite differently. This notion has gained traction in the field of queer and gender studies with (Halberstam 2005) and other scholars theorizing that this cis-hetero life trajectory will oftentimes not apply to queer individuals. The idea has also become popular in the field of dis_ability studies or crip theory as the concept *crip time*, a concept that not only “expand[s] but explode[s]” other concepts of time and that “requires reimagining our notions of what can and should happen on time, recognising how expectations of ‘how long things take’ are based on very particular minds and bodies” (Kafer 2013, 27). This different temporal logic operates on the everyday level of the lived experiences of dis_abled/chronically ill individuals and across the life span. It asks questions about present and past but also the possibility and conditions of a future.

Not only is there a genealogical overlap of queer and crip time concepts, but these concepts also tend to overlap in the lived experiences of queer and dis_abled/chronically ill individuals. The research presented in this talk aims to gain insights into the conceptualization of time through a linguistic analysis of the discursive construction of a different temporal logic in an interview with Anwuli, a trans*, Black person with ME (CFS)/Long Covid.

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Panel 7: Language, Power and Surveillance

Chair: Colin Chemelle

“Did I use correct grammar before I died?” Stress-Induced Language under Surveillance in Cockpits Seconds Before Aeroplanes Crashed

Isep Saepul Hidayat

Content note: Contents may not be suitable for some; attendee discretion is advised.

“[...] who called Cleveland?” [...] “Allah knows.” (in United Airlines 93; 11.09.2001; 09:39–09:47 a.m.)

Cockpit Voice Recorder (CVR) is an example of audio surveillance in which all the sounds that are audible in the cockpits are captured for a period of time. Like CCTV records people’s visible actions, CVR records people’s (particularly pilots’) conversations, which are seen as very important to any possible forensic investigation. Since the people being recorded are, by default, at work, as well as aware of being recorded, it is expectable that they maintain certain linguistic characteristics, such as registers as, for example, so as to not sound unprofessional.

Yet, under high stress when life-or-death danger is imminent, would you stick to your professional jargon and politeness or (since you know you are about to pass away) just break the inter-register walls and use your vocal-cords for more “primitive” semiotic-activity such as screaming or grunting (which is closer to the area of zoo semiotic)?

Unlike languages in suicide notes or deathbed confessions, which are to some degree planned, well thought-out and occasionally intended to incite certain sentiments in the readers/listeners, a person's language skills are, when faced with unexpected deadly dangers, highly stimulus-bound (cf. *alarm call* in zoo semiotics). It is, therefore, expected that your last words sound more spontaneous. In contrast to performing spontaneous language in private life, though, you know that whatever you utter in pre-calamity cockpits is being recorded.

Using a corpus-based methodology by analysing the last minute(s) of the CVR transcripts of different aviation accidents/incidents, this research allows us to look into language being used as an agent of both idiosyncratic attitudes towards stress and fear and that of practice of self-surveillance at the same time. Through relevant elements of pragmatics such as implicature, illocutionary force, speech acts etc. we will reveal some facts surrounding language use in this particular type of setting.

“GIRLS! BOYS!” Toilet Crisis and Bathroom Surveillance

Colin Chemelle

Should one look up any combination of ‘trans’ and ‘toilet’ on their search engine, it is likely they will find a battalion of news articles, talking about the latest anti-trans bills and assaults happening around the world. Indeed, over the years, it seems like going to the loo has become more and more of a challenge for trans folks living in the West. Through various practices of securitization from both governing bodies and the media, public discourse is now obsessed with monitoring who can go to which bathrooms.

However, discourse around bathroom access is far from a new concept. As Bender-Braid puts it, “public space is where power is enacted” (2015, 2), and the very nature and function of bathrooms contribute greatly to heightening this disciplining aspect.

What this talk aims for is, firstly, to identify the power structures and marginalising processes at work in bathrooms, as those have already been well documented. Then, using this body of work as a base from which to move forward, the goal here is twofold: outlining available and realistic solutions to ‘fix’ the bathroom situation, and defining the obstacles that complexify this goal. Through twelve interviews with trans individuals, the plurality of bathroom problems and the interviewees’ different expectations for inclusive solutions highlight aspects of the aforementioned complexity, as well as how the “sex”-based segregation of bathrooms stems and still benefits from a security-oriented discourse, which is how authorities had already justified this very separation back in the 18th century.

This paper of course does not claim to speak in the name of all trans folks. Along with intersectional factors such as race, class, able-bodiedness etc., trans fluidity and plurality renders it impossible to represent the trans experience as a whole. It is also crucial to acknowledge that the bathroom problem is not exclusive to trans people. It is the focus here because of constraints in time and resources, but this field also – and mainly – applies to individuals with disabilities, gender non-conforming cis people, parents, caretakers and more broadly anyone concerned with making public space more comfortable for everyone.

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Panel 8: "Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty": Art, Aesthetics, and Literature

Chair: Sijia Huang

Finding Duende: Flamenco and Spanish Surrealism in the Selected Poems of Federico Garcia Lorca

Sijia Huang

Cante jondo, meaning "deep song," is regarded as the most profound and expressive form of flamenco that absorbs the region's rich mixture of cultures, including Arab, Jewish, and Gypsy influences. As a distinctive Andalusian folk music form that serves as more than only a sort of entertainment, it expresses the suffering in people's daily lives and conveys themes such as death, deep sorrow, and despair. As one of the most influential writers of twentieth-century Spain, Federico García Lorca inherited the collective sorrow and emotional intensity of Andalusian music and poured it into his poetry, combining folklore, symbolism, musicality, and personal expression. As he regarded cante jondo as an essential expression of Spanish cultural identity, he aimed to preserve its authenticity against the effects of commercialization.

Through the analysis of Federico García Lorca's lectures and selected poems from his two volumes, *Poema del cante jondo* and *Romancero gitano*, this project focuses on the inspiration of *cante jondo* on Lorca's literary works and examines how he incorporated the essence of this traditional Andalusian music into his own poetic and emotional expression. This study also investigates the key term *duende* in Lorca's literary works. Even though the term *duende* had been deeply rooted in Spanish art history for centuries, Lorca was the first to introduce it as a quality or core element of an artist's creation, and it is usually associated with a certain mysterious and powerful force that produces a hypnotic and dream-like state. Lorca's version of *duende* absorbs the elements of bullfighting and flamenco and usually emerges from grief, deep sorrow, and a sense of death. By exploring *cante jondo* and the echo of *duende* in Lorca's literary works, this study argues that Lorca incorporated Andalusian folk music culture into his poetic language to preserve regional cultural memory and express themes of death, sorrow, grief, passion, desire, and tragedy.

“The More He Can Be Nobody the More He Can Play That Horn”: Jazz, Identity, and Aesthetic Truth in Jackie Kay’s *Trumpet*

Jacqueline Weigl

Literary representations of jazz frequently draw on the music's improvisational qualities through fragmented and polyphonic narration, rhythmic prose, and repetition. Within such “jazz literature,” jazz as artistic expression is often associated with the discovery or articulation of identity, even rebirth. Jackie Kay's *Trumpet* complicates this tradition.

The novel reconstructs the life of celebrated jazz trumpeter Joss Moody through a series of posthumous testimonies after, to the world's shock, he is revealed to have lived as a trans man. Moody's own voice remains largely absent, rendering him a spectral presence within his own story. It is only in the novel's central chapter, entitled "Music," that the trumpeter's art is explored as an aesthetic realm where he "loses his sex, his race, his memory" (Kay 131). The literary, improvised jazz solo offers a glimpse into a character of contradictions whose identity is closely linked to artistic practice, while simultaneously undermining the idea of music as a path toward an authentic self.

I argue that jazz in *Trumpet* does not function as a medium of self-expression or identity revelation, but as an aesthetic practice of erosion of the self in which identity is dissolved rather than expressed. In both Moody's jazz improvisation and the novel's narrative, the possibility of biographical or essential truth is challenged. Focusing on the textual translation of Moody's jazz in the "Music" chapter, I suggest that it characterizes the musician as an elusive and fundamentally unknowable figure. Rather than providing access to an authentic inner self, the performance stages a withdrawal from fixed identity. The scene becomes pivotal to understanding the other characters' attempts and failures to capture Moody through the written word after his death. In this sense, *Trumpet* engages a broader aesthetic tension between artistic expression and self-erasure, suggesting that both music and narrative produce opacity rather than recover a singular "true" identity.

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“Always Be Escalating”: George Saunders, Russian Formalism, and the Craft of Fiction

Andra Flatter

This talk examines George Saunders’ *A Swim in a Pond in the Rain: In Which Four Russians Give a Master Class on Writing, Reading, and Life* through the framework of Russian Formalism, arguing that Saunders’ approach to fiction writing revives key formalist ideas about perception, expectation and narrative structure. While George Saunders presents his readings of nineteenth-century Russian literature as practical lessons developed through his teaching at Syracuse University, his discussions of pattern stories, escalation, narrative unreliability, and strangeness closely parallel formalist concepts such as defamiliarization and the *skaz* tradition associated with writers like Nikolai Gogol. Saunders’ creative writing pedagogy implicitly returns to the formalist premise that literature resists habitual perception by making the familiar strange, while his emphasis on stylized and unstable narrators recalls *skaz* techniques that foreground subjective perception and distorted storytelling. Particular attention will be given to Saunders’ recurring claim that fiction must continually renew the reader’s attention through surprise and formal disruption.

By placing contemporary creative writing pedagogy alongside Russian Formalism, this talk explores how formalist concepts continue to shape not only literary criticism, but also the practice and teaching of contemporary fiction.

Ultimately, it asks when narrative technique becomes more than a matter of craft or technical proficiency – when it transcends the mechanics of storytelling and begins to shape a work's unique artistic identity. This question sits at the intersection of several longstanding debates in literary studies: the tension between genius and craft, the extent to which literary effects can be taught or reproduced, and the persistent opacity of the creative process itself.

Panel 9: Poetry and Song

Chair: Laura Altenburg & Sören Melchers

A Diachronic, Contrastive Study of Conceptual LOVE Metaphors in Taylor Swift's Early and Later Albums

Salma Zeyad Aly Mourad

This study explores the evolution of conceptual metaphors of LOVE across Taylor Swift's discography by comparing her first four albums *Debut*, *Fearless*, *Speak Now* and *Red* to her most recent four albums *Folklore*, *Evermore*, *Midnights* and *The Tortured Poets Department* in order to unravel the shifting conceptualizations of LOVE throughout her career. The history of metaphor and the Conceptual Metaphor Theory are introduced, tying them to the emotion of love and its metaphorical conceptualizations in studies across cultures and song. The results are presented and analyzed in the broader context of the study to answer the following research question: How do conceptual metaphors evolve across Taylor Swift's discography in terms of their conceptualization and portrayal of LOVE?

I hypothesize that the earlier albums favor conventional metaphors, while later albums show an increase in novel metaphors and more complex uses of conventional ones. Using the Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP), 566 metaphorical expressions were identified across 174 songs and categorized into structural patterns such as LOVE IS (A)... and THE OBJECT OF LOVE IS (A)....

The analysis of Taylor Swift's songwriting demonstrates a significant evolution of the conceptualization of LOVE metaphors across her discography. While the frequency of metaphors decreases from the earlier albums to the later albums, this study shows that frequency alone does not determine metaphorical depth. What matters is the nature of the metaphor.

“The Sound of Water”—Haiku, Its Poetics & the English Language

Sören Melchers

Haiku is arguably Japan's greatest literary export – and at the start of the 20th century American writers were happy importers. Haiku made its entrée into anglophone literature with the Modernists, satisfying Ezra Pounds's demand to “make it new.” Richard Wright, primarily known for writing novels about race relations in the United States, left behind a body of circa 4.000 haiku. Wright always strictly adhered to the syllabic structure of 5-7-5.

While anglophone writers – and American writers in particular – were quick to adopt the new (to them) form of haiku, their adoption was far from perfect. Indeed, writing a haiku in English and observing all the rules that are traditionally laid for haiku in its native language is not possible.

The 5-7-5 structure of haiku for example, is not originally based *on* syllables, but rather on phonetic units called *on* (音; morae in English). There is no exact correspondence between *on* and syllables, as an *on* contains more information than a syllable. Rendering haiku's structure via syllables instead of *on* is one of many concessions necessitated by replicating the form in a language it was not conceived in.

Haiku leads a marginal existence in the greater body of anglophone literature, yet there is fierce debate over how the form is to be most faithfully reproduced in English, with some commentators advocating for a strict adherence to the 5-7-5 form, while others embrace a free-form approach that subordinates form to the idea the poet wishes to express.

In this talk I want to present haiku through that latter lens: I will present the philosophy of haiku; the poetics that underpins the form. Furthermore, I will explain how to read a haiku, which will involve a discussion of the hermeneutics of suspicion and how they impede a haiku's reading.

Haiku Workshop

hosted by Sören Melchers

This workshop is intended as a companion piece to the presentation on the history of haiku in the English language. I will go over the structural and philosophical principles of haiku as an introduction to the workshop. I will also show examples of both historic and contemporary haiku. The goal of this workshop is to demonstrate how the form of haiku informs its poetics and enables attendants to compose haiku on their own that are in harmony with its poetics.

Panel 10: Gone But Not Forgotten: History and Memory in Anglophone Literature

Chair: Helen Scott

“It Must Be Hard Being a Man, Too”: Remembering the 1960s through Narratives of Masculinity in Crisis

Julia Klumbach

Despite the centrality of the 1960s in American cultural memory, the ways in which this decade is remembered remain deeply contested and often shaped by reductive narrative frameworks. This talk examines how popular media constructs and negotiates the collective memory of the 1960s through the lens of masculinity in crisis.

Drawing on theories of cultural memory (e.g. Maurice Halbwachs) and gender studies, it analyzes the film *Forrest Gump* and the television series *Mad Men* as influential “vehicles of memory” that shape public understandings of the decade. Rather than reconstructing the historical reality of the 1960s, both texts actively reinterpret the period’s major social transformations—including civil rights, second-wave feminism, the Counterculture, and the Vietnam War—through narratives centered on the experience of White, middle-class, male protagonists. The talk argues that these representations are structured through a narrative of a “crisis of masculinity,” in which the perceived destabilization of the traditional social and cultural status quo and the consequential disruption of the traditional man’s normative position become a primary framework for remembering the 1960s.

Through a comparative analysis, the talk demonstrates that *Forrest Gump* constructs the 1960s as a period of moral and social decline, ultimately resolving this crisis through a nostalgic restoration of patriarchal order and traditional values. In contrast, *Mad Men* offers a more ambivalent and critical engagement, portraying the crisis of masculinity as both self-inflicted and irreversible, thereby emphasizing adaptation rather than restoration.

By situating these texts within their respective historical contexts of production, the thesis highlights how contemporary anxieties and ideological struggles shape representations of the past. Ultimately, it argues that popular culture does not merely reflect but actively produces collective memory, with masculinity functioning as a key site for the negotiation of the retrospective meaning and legacy of the 1960s.

Nineteenth-Century Attitudes Towards Literature in *The Lancet*

Nikki Berger

From Austen to Collins, from Dickens to Stevenson, doctors are present in almost every (Victorian) novel. Besides lawyers, the medical profession is perhaps the profession most often called upon to further the plot. This omni-presence in literature, combined with the liminal space doctors occupy in the social hierarchy, means that their depictions vary widely. The country practitioner lagging behind the medical progress of his time is as familiar a figure as the reliably helpful family doctor or, conversely, the actively harmful quack.

But how did real-life doctors feel about their fictional counterparts? Did they, like our contemporary practitioners on social media, feel the need to comment on inaccuracies and unfavourable depictions? Is there a Victorian equivalent to the *Grey's Anatomy* reactions we see today?

This paper aims to characterise the stance of the medical profession towards literary depictions of themselves at the turn of the century. Using reviews of novels as well as addresses concerned with literature that were published in the medical journal *The Lancet*, it aims to identify what attitude(s) medical professionals held towards literature and is especially concerned with the language that is used to establish these attitudes. It is further interested in how personal experience shapes these depictions, which it investigates by comparing medical men written by laypeople to those written by medico-authors.

Self-Archivisation: Narrative Ways of Constructing Archives and Identities in Watkins's *I Love You but I've Chosen Darkness* (2021)

Judith Grönke

Claire Vaye Watkins's novel *I Love You but I've Chosen Darkness* (2021) is an autofictional reconstruction of the author's, as well as the narrator's, identity after becoming a mother. On her journey she connects past, present, and future through her own memory and family history. The novel, however, is more than just a personal narrative: it incorporates many different text types, such as the real letters of the author's mother, excerpts from a memoir published by her father, travel guides for Southern California, her home region, and depression questionnaires.

This paper will analyse how memory and identity are constructed and reconstructed in Watkins' novel. It aims to show that the text is created as a conceptional archive in which the narrator's voice is only one voice in a wider context of intertextual references.

The idea of the conceptual archive will then be placed in a theoretical framework of memory and the construction of identity. Theoretical ideas applied to archives will be looked at from the individual's point of view to show how precisely the conceptual archive of the text is related to the reconstruction of the narrator's identity after giving birth. Furthermore, the paper will take into consideration the autofictional tendencies of the novel and how they contribute to and influence identity construction and the archive.

Panel 11: Between Cinema and Literature: Cross-Disciplinary Approaches and Case Studies

Chair: Polina Krylova

‘Out of the two of them, no doubt she was the better man’: Violence and Women in Joe Abercrombie’s Fantasy Western *Red Country*

Polina Krylova

Few cinematic genres are as deeply intertwined with literature as the Western. Continuing the tradition of nineteenth-century Romantic adventure novels, the classical Hollywood Western (1945–1965) solidified the image of the cowboy: a lone gunslinger battling bandits and “Indians” before disappearing into the sunset. Yet the decline of the genre’s “Golden Age” brought increasing critical reflection. Feminist and postcolonial scholarship challenged the treatment of women in Westerns, where they were often reduced to objects of sexual appeal or symbolic figures within the hero’s moral struggle. Critics also questioned the genre’s supposed “authenticity,” arguing that Westerns reflected the ideological concerns of 1950s America more than historical reality.

As Richard Slotkin argues, the Myth of the Frontier has largely replaced history itself, turning the Western into a contested space shaped by overlapping ideological and cultural constructs. This raises an important question: is it possible to create a Western without reproducing its traditional stereotypes?

British grimdark fantasy author Joe Abercrombie attempts exactly this in his novel *Red Country*. By combining fantasy and Western conventions, Abercrombie creates a hybrid form that calls for a combination of literary and cinema studies to appreciate the full scope of the subversive strategies employed, which was the goal of this project.

Although the novel is set in the same fantasy world as his earlier works, Abercrombie identifies the romanticized violence and frontier narratives shared by fantasy and the Western. Through this cross-genre experiment, he constructs a “Frontier-esque” setting free from the expectations of historical realism often tied to oppressive portrayals of women, while still employing recognizable Western imagery: carriage chases, saloons, mining towns, brothels, and vast grasslands.

This hybrid setting, reimagined through the escapist Fantasy framework, allows Abercrombie to center a female protagonist who fulfills many stereotypical (and highly violent) cowboy functions while simultaneously challenging them. The other subversive strategy Abercrombie uses is “mimetic”: through emotionally realistic and deeply unheroic portrayals of women surviving violence on the frontier, Abercrombie “writes back” to a genre that has historically marginalized women’s experiences, restoring these “lost voices” through the power of the fantastical.

Between Fidelity and Reinvention: Miyazaki's Adaptation of *Howl's Moving Castle*

Isabell Gleiter

This project analyzes the structural differences between Diane Wynn Jones' 1986 novel *Howl's Moving Castle* and Hayao Miyazaki's 2004 animated adaption, in terms of how Studio Ghibli's animation transformed the source material based on their classic iconographic narrative choices.

Wynn Jones's novel *Howl's Moving Castle* is the first work in a trilogy of children's books, exemplified by its classic fantasy plot of the main protagonist Sophie being cursed by an evil witch and joining forces with the wizard Howl to break her curse, while falling in love with each other during their adventure. However, Miyazaki consciously chose a darker, subdued aesthetic for his adaptation, ranging from the music to the animated imagery and most critically, the plot. In the movie, the core plot revolves around a war between two kingdoms and forceful drafting of wizards as soldiers, which Howl desperately tries to escape while protecting Sophie from the effects of her curse. Miyazaki chose this plot to comment on America's involvement in the Iraq war, a narrative choice which entirely diverges from Wynn Jones' original imagery and story intent. Interestingly enough, the movie has largely overshadowed its source material in notoriety, which begs the question of how an adaptation with such stark structural differences and an entirely new core plot can outgrow its source material yet be perceived as staying truthful.

This project will examine how Miyazaki's narrative and aesthetic choices add to the novel's original messaging and are, in fact, necessary for its successful adaptation. It challenges the notion of 'Fidelity Criticism' as Miyazaki has proven that remaining close to the source material is not necessary for a successful adaptation. Instead, this proposal highlights the changing political landscapes between 1984 and 2004, as well as cultural differences between Wynn Jones and Hayao Miyazaki as determining factors of the source material's transformation and the movie's legacy.

When Poetry Becomes Cinema: Tarkovsky, Memory, and the Language of Trauma

Arina Shalagina and Violetta Kyian

In our project, we explore the work of Andrey Tarkovsky, focusing on his autobiographical and groundbreaking film *Mirror*. We analyze the film using both literary and visual approaches, analyzing how it functions as a site where literature and cinematic form intersect. Tarkovsky incorporates the poetry of his father, Arseny Tarkovsky — a prominent poet in the Soviet Union — into the film to explore the relationship between his parents, who divorced when he was still a child. This experience left a lasting scar on his life and later became central to his artistic work.

In particular, we focus on how Tarkovsky uses his father's poem "First Meetings" to challenge conventional understandings of intimacy, memory, and parental relationships. The questions we explore include:

- How does cinema use poetic language and cinematic form to explore and transform parental relationships and traumatic experiences?
- Does this process involve a loss of meaning, or does it create something unique — a cinematic experience that rethinks literature?
- How does Tarkovsky use his father's poetry in *Mirror* to reinterpret his parental relationships through a cinematic lens?

The central argument of this project is that Tarkovsky's cinema operates as an intermedial space where poetic language and cinematic form intersect, producing meaning not through simplification or adaptation, but through productive tension and convergence. More broadly, we argue that Tarkovsky does not use cinema as an illustration of poetry. Instead, he treats poetry and cinema as continuations of one another, transforming trauma and human relationships into embodied experiences. Through abstract metaphors and archetypal imagery, audiences establish personal connections with his work. In this way, *Mirror* is not only about reimagining his relationship with his parents — it also explores universal themes such as love, religion, loss, and trauma.

We draw on literary, cultural, and psychoanalytic frameworks, including Cathy Caruth's trauma theory, to examine how literature and cinema represent trauma. Ultimately, we argue that Tarkovsky's cinema becomes an independent art form that preserves the significance of all participating media while creating a new symbiosis.

Fire of the Loins or Failure of Reading? The Cultural Misconstruction of Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita*

Esha Butt

Recurrently condemned as a text that caters to paedophilic fantasies and often misrepresented by film adaptations as a tragic or problematic romance, Nabokov's *Lolita* remains one of the most debated works of twentieth-century literature even in 2026. This study examines how *Lolita* has been repeatedly misconstrued over time, both through reductive cultural readings and through film adaptations that soften or distort its narrative complexity. Twice adapted into film, first in 1962 by Stanley Kubrick and later in 1997 by Adrian Lyne, there is a softening in both adaptations that overlooks the novel's and the protagonist's moral complexity, particularly by downplaying Humbert's manipulative narration and reframing the story in ways that risk presenting the relationship as romantic rather than as an exercise of coercive power.

This study employs Norman Fairclough's model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine how language functions as a site of power within *Lolita*. Rather than treating Humbert as a transparent psychological subject, as is done in the existing literary scholarship, this study analyses his narration as a discursive construct that actively shapes reader perception. CDA provides a framework for understanding how language produces, sustains, and normalises particular meanings, especially in relation to power and ideology, that cannot be overlooked in *Lolita*'s case. It also examines how Humbert's linguistic choices, rhetorical strategies, and aestheticization of desire construct a narrative that attempts to justify and obscure moral transgression.

By situating Humbert's discourse within broader cultural narratives of sexuality, morality, and deviance, this study argues that the reduction of his character to a one-dimensional figure of paedophilia overlooks the complex ways in which language mediates ethical judgement. Thus, it allows for a more nuanced reading of *Lolita*, revealing how narrative voice operates as a mechanism of control, persuasion, and distortion, and how, over the years, film adaptations have also failed to represent so.

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She Was an Angel: Portrayal of Death of Women in War Media (Using the Example of *Band of Brothers*)

Bella Kozlova

This study examines how war media portrays female characters and their deaths as fundamentally different from those of their male counterparts. The analysis centers on the character of Renée, a Belgian military nurse featured in “Bastogne”, the sixth episode of the 2001 HBO miniseries *Band of Brothers*, created by Tom Hanks and Steven Spielberg and based on Stephen E. Ambrose's 1992 non-fiction book of the same name. Renée's role is so complex and her influence on the male protagonist so profound that she is denied the ‘right to die’.

The portrayal of death is inevitable in a media about war, and “Bastogne” contains two crucial death scenes.

One of them graphically depicts a soldier's suffering, demonstrating the episode's willingness to illustrate the torment and horror of human death in war. This is the reason the death of a female nurse, Renée, leaves the viewer perplexed, as it occurs entirely off-screen and is depicted only symbolically, serving primarily to help the male protagonist realize his role in the war. The episode employs multiple cinematic tools to showcase that female characters are not real humans but symbols and therefore must be portrayed as perfect, selfless 'angels', going against the overall dark and gruesome depictions of death during a war.

Notably, Renée does not appear in Ambrose's book but is based on a real historical figure who died in the line of duty. Her inclusion in the series thus raises a critical question: does her portrayal constitute a meaningful tribute to her wartime sacrifice, or does it reduce her to a narrative device designed to dramatise the male hero's arc?

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Panel 12: Gaming, Language, Narrative

Chair: Alec von der Schulenburg

Madame Clairvoya and the Travelling Cart—Antigypsyist Images in Gaming

Isaac Schmidt

Musician, fortune teller, travelling folk. While the gaming world has started to center more diverse characters and plotlines, thanks to game making becoming more accessible to a wider range of people, there is one trope that persists: the ‘Gypsy’ stereotype of Romani people. We see it front and center in AAA titles like *Skylrim* or *Baldur’s Gate* and we see it done small, casual, and almost hidden in Indie titles like *Graveyard Keeper*. We see it in the aforementioned so-called ‘Western’ media and we see it in so-called ‘Eastern’ media such as the Rune Factory series from Japan.

In my talk, I will present how this stereotype came to be, why it is problematic and how we can recognize it in the games we play (and in the case of Pen and Paper: run). Media never exists solely within its own bubble; it is informed by and in part shapes our views of the world. By critically examining these portrayals, we can challenge harmful narratives and begin a conversation about respectful representation and inclusivity.

Lastly, I will discuss the term ‘Gypsy’ in regards to working with antigypsyist stereotypes in media. Working as a HiWi at the *Research Centre on Antigypsyism at the Department of History*, I would like to give a compressed overview of discussions around the term and its usage. What is the difference between antigypsyism and antiromanism, is the term ‘Gypsy’ a racial slur and is there any context in which it is appropriate to use?

“I am the Sorry Cop”: Impoliteness in *Disco Elysium*

Selena Henn

Over the past decades, video games have emerged as an increasingly popular way to spend one’s free time and socialise. Whenever interactions happen in a game, impoliteness can occur. Historically, the linguistic study of impoliteness in video games has been limited to interactions between players, ignoring those between the player and the game. This paper aims to shed light on the latter as they provide unique insights into attitudes toward impoliteness within video games. It investigates the implementation of impoliteness in role-playing games (RPGs) through the analysis of impoliteness strategies in *Disco Elysium* (ZA/UM Studio 2021), a critically acclaimed video RPG in which language is central to the core dynamics. The paper first compiles a corpus of utterances from a set frame in the game which contain instances of impoliteness strategies as developed by Culpeper (1996). From there, patterns in distribution and possible functions of certain strategies are identified and compared to determine the attitude toward impoliteness within *Disco Elysium*. The findings show that impoliteness appears as a characterisation tool that is on the one hand used to create non-player characters (NPCs), and on the other to provide opportunities for the player to construct their own version of the player character (PC). While a variety of impoliteness strategies and functions is offered, frequencies differ. How the player chooses to engage with these opportunities affects story progression. To summarise, impoliteness functions as a tool that needs to be evaluated and used consciously by the player. These findings serve as an entranceway into the much broader field of impoliteness within single-player video games.

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TTRPGs and Queer Identities

Alec von der Schulenburg

Tabletop role-playing games like *Dungeons and Dragons* have become more popular over the last five years than ever before. With this has come a growing body of both academic and non-academic work focusing on roleplaying games (both computer-based roleplaying and tabletop). Work like the *Routledge Handbook of Role-Playing Game Studies* give an amazing insight into this body of work, showing the different approaches to analyzing, understanding, and furthering various different aspects of roleplaying games, from sociology and psychology, all the way to economics or literary studies. However, there is not a lot of academic work to be found, either in this handbook or elsewhere, that combines linguistic approaches and role-playing games.

Tabletop role-playing as a game is almost exclusively reliant on language and communication. While there are physical objects, such as dice, books, or miniatures on battle maps to aid the imagination, the main parts of the game happen in the communication between players. This presentation is part of my MA thesis which looks at how players may use TTRPGs to explore aspects of their own identity.

It uses recordings from one group playing *Dungeons and Dragons*, as well as interviews with that group and analyzes them in a broadly qualitative way, aiming to gain a deeper understanding of how language and gaming are used to explore marginalized identities.

Panel 13: Changing the Narrative: Retellings of Classics, Myths, and Fairytales

Chair: Maria Doering & T Klefisch

Rewriting the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*: Feminist Revisionism in Divakaruni's Fiction

Akshara Madhavan

In recent years, there has been a noticeable resurgence of films based on Hindu epics, a trend linked to the rise of Hindu nationalism in India. Alongside this revival, right-wing cultural discourses have increasingly emphasized traditional gender roles, frequently drawing on mythological narratives to legitimize these norms. Epics like the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* are thus not only retold but also mobilized as cultural tools that reinforce patriarchal ideals, positioning women within narrowly defined roles of sacrifice and moral purity.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's novels *The Palace of Illusions* (2008) and *The Forest of Enchantments* (2019) gain renewed relevance within this context. As significant examples of feminist revisionist mythmaking, these novels reimagine canonical epics through the perspectives of Draupadi and Sita, respectively. By centering women's voices, Divakaruni challenges entrenched patriarchal narrative traditions and reclaims spaces within myths that

have historically marginalized female subjectivity. This transforms the female protagonists from archetypal figures into layered, complex individuals with agency.

This presentation will explore how the aforementioned novels challenge dominant ideological frameworks and analyze their role in reshaping mythological discourse in a contemporary socio-political context. It will also critically examine whether these retellings ultimately subvert or reproduce the very structures they seek to challenge.

Rewriting Female Power in Myths: An Analysis of the Film *Lokah Chapter 1: Chandra*

Jisha Jijumon

Supernatural female entities, such as sirens or gorgons, have long been vilified and accused in literature and folktales. Contemporary reinterpretations of supernatural or mythical female characters strive to dismantle existing negative portrayals. Perspectives that reduce female autonomy to hysteria or rage that is finally tamed or punished are challenged by more liberating narratives that exonerate vilified women. This narrative evolution can be observed in South Asian cultural productions, including visual media. *Lokah Chapter 1: Chandra* (2025), for example, is an Indian superhero film whose protagonist is based on ‘Kalliyankattu Neeli’, a Yakshi (female vengeful spirit) from Southern Indian folklore, who is also worshipped in certain parts of Kerala.

This research aims to analyse how the retelling of the myth of ‘Kalliyankattu Neeli’ in the film *Lokah Chapter 1: Chandra* exculpates a feared and villainised entity, offering her a new role, in this case, that of a superhero.

It also examines the identities of the characters in the film and their shifts between human and non-human entities. The protagonist's transformation from dreaded villain into beloved superhero can be read as contributing to the formation of a new cultural memory, where she is vindicated and remembered as such in the years to come.

Counterhegemonic Discourses on Monstrousness in *Out There Screaming*

Maja Schlag

In recent years, popular culture has seen a surge in the number of films, novels, TV shows and short stories being released that can be summarized under the header of Black horror. While the horror genre oftentimes actively reinforces racist stereotypes by othering and demonizing Black people and casting them as monstrous, Black writers, too, have always made use of gothic horror and endeavored to put forth counternarratives that challenge hegemonic whiteness. A recent example is the anthology *Out There Screaming* (2023), co-edited by Jordan Peele, the director of *Get Out* (2017), which opens up broader questions about the subversive potential of horror, in particular as far as the trope of the monster as racialized other is concerned. This paper analyzes three stories from the collection, namely Maurice Broaddus's "The Norwood Trouble", N.K. Jemisin's "Reckless Eyeballing", and Nicole D. Sconiers's "A Bird Sings by the Etching Tree", in which the main character turns into a monster of sorts. All three stories make it abundantly clear that this monstrous transformation is decidedly *not* an external manifestation of a presumably inherent Otherness but instead rooted in and a reaction to the mechanisms of white, male supremacy.

Importantly, monstrousness here can be reinterpreted as a source of power that facilitates the ability to resist and fight violent systems and individuals. Ultimately, however, it remains a double-edged sword: incorporating elements of what Maisha Wester defines as BLM Gothic, the stories unanimously call into question their respective monsters' agency and power when they are faced with a horror that cannot effectively be purged.

Our Flag Means Death: Queering Pirate Legends

Mia Plueschke

Edward Teach, or Blackbeard, is probably the most well-known historical pirate. While many of us may recognise him from the fourth *Pirates of the Caribbean* movie (2011), first records of his life can be found in Captain Johnson's *A General History of the Pyrates* (1724). Published just a few years after the pirate's death, the work already sensationalises Blackbeard's life, laying the textual groundwork for turning him into a legend – first in Britain and later more generally in Western popular culture. Although pirate life is inherently queer (i.e. anti-normative), *A General History* has largely contributed to the norm of pirates as fearsome, adventurous, and ruthless that is very common in their depiction. My research focuses on David Jenkins's HBO TV show *Our Flag Means Death* (2022–2023; abbreviated to *OFMD*), which retells the story of Blackbeard and his contemporary Stede Bonnet, based loosely on Captain Johnson's writings. Instead of leaning into the legends of heroism and spectacular adventures, however, Jenkins presents the pirates' lives in the form of a romantic comedy, disrupting both the norm of the ruthless pirate and historical heteronormativity.

OFMD is an undeniably queer show, from the gay relationship of its protagonists to the individual ways each member of their crew does not fit into British Colonial society. In my presentation, I want to explore *OFMD*'s anti-normativity, specifically in its portrayal of relationality, and ask to what extent this is an effective way of queering a legend and its history. I argue that by spotlighting the perspective of queer characters and depicting non-conformity as something to aspire to, the series manages to transform Blackbeard's brutal pirate legend into one of queer joy, and to reintroduce queerness where it has been largely omitted.

Panel 14: Forensic Linguistics

Chair: Polina Kuznetcova

Analysis of Violent Expressions by Comparing Realized and Non-Realized Threats in English and Turkish

Esat Furkan Güteryüz

Intent is a psychological trait that needs to be present before an individual may proceed to take action. To assess whether a threat is credible, it is essential to recognize the existence of intent within threatening language. However, there is a lack of scientific direction on the topic of how linguistic expressions of violent intent might be used. This presentation will compare realized and non-realized threats using appraisal analysis, and the features of such threats in both English and Turkish. It aims to uncover patterns of stance-taking by the authors of realized and non-realized threats. It is expected that, in English, while the realized threats are more subtle and moral, the non-realized threats are expected to be more violent and imaginative.

I State Therefore I Do - Analysis of the Epistemic Status of the Testimony and the Output Produced by Methods of Forensic Linguistics

Fernando Oliveira

When someone confesses to an action, one could argue that something has been said instead of done. However, the confession in a legal sense constitutes an act with legal consequences, not merely a description. I will discuss the difference between saying and doing something using John Searle's speech act theory, by taking an approach of analytic epistemology, meaning I will analyze the epistemic status of linguistic evidence. Do these linguistic methods produce knowledge or justified belief? Or something else? What conditions must be met to define a confession as an act that counts as evidence and, this is the core question of my paper, what is the epistemic status of this evidence? The perspective I will take on is that of the legal system as an institution, so the question shifts from whether the judge can know, or whether the interrogator can know, to can the institution know?

For this endeavor I plan to draw on John Searle's speech act theory, Austin's theory of infelicity and Goldman's reliabilism.

Cross-Examinations in Rape Trials: Analyzing Questioning Strategies Employed by Lawyers to Discredit Victims

Charlie Madest

Content note: Sexual Assault, Violence

Rape victims often feel revictimized during their trial.

Rape victims often feel revictimized during their trial. They are often continuously harassed and forced to relive their rape, not only within their own social circle, but also on the street, and even within the courtroom. No matter how many legal reforms rape laws undergo, the victims are not safe from facing public and private scrutiny, especially during their interaction with a legal system created and usually applied through a male perspective. This patriarchal approach to any legal interaction is realized not only by the lawyers but also by the juror's decisions (Conley et. al., 2019), leading to the decade-old gold standard of 'utmost resistance'. A rape trial showcases male domination being realized in social action and the power imbalance between victim and law becomes especially clear in cross-examinations.

This presentation focuses on a specific rape case of a homeless woman by former NFL player Kellen Winslow, who was also charged of multiple other sexual crimes. The focus lies on question types during the cross examination of the victim. In a cross examination, a lawyer questions a witness of the opposition, often trying to discredit their narrative. I focus specifically on how the lawyer uses questions to establish control and exploits rape myths to discredit her story, using Audience Design (Bell, 1984), and Woodbury (1984) and Ehrlich's (2021) question types.

This qualitative research intends to show the power of questioning strategies, the sexist implications and prejudice of our law, and its potential negative impact on rape trials and victims.

The Case of Wanna-Be Serial Killers: The Performance of Remorse and Victimhood Through the Lens and Language

Defne Yilmaz

This talk aims to analyse the language of the self-made documentary diary of two murderers, Draper and Adamcik, using their own video recordings, the interrogation room recordings in 2006, and a one-on-one interview with Draper in 2024. The presentation offers a dive into non-verbal and verbal use of language through the application of forensic linguistics. The analysis dissects the performance of victimhood through language at the very beginning of the murder investigation of their high school friend, Cassie Jo Stoddart (21 December 1989–22 September 2006), and later moves to the performance of remorse. Both Draper and Adamcik received life imprisonment without a chance of parole, despite being underage. However, the discussions they recorded on their amateur murder tape during the planning period and the recording right after they murdered their friend had significant value for the court, both as solid evidence and as counter evidence against their statements during the legal progress of the case.

Panel 15: Against the Clock and Off the Map: Temporal and Spatial Reconfigurations in Fiction

Chair: Andra Flatter

Facing the Past while the Present is Breaking: Experiencing Apocalyptic Time and Space in TJ Klune's *We Burned So Bright* T Klefisch

In his new novel *We Burned So Bright* (2026), the American author TJ Klune depicts two elderly husbands who set out towards a place that is strongly connected to their shared past. Over the course of the final month of planet Earth, joy, anger, love, and grief push them forward “in a race against the clock to make it from Maine to Washington State”, as the blurb advertises. During this road trip, Don and Rodney encounter several people who have lost their structured lives and while some are deeply unsettled, others settle down in new places for good. They attempt to navigate these haunting meetings with strangers — who enact their own sense of justice amidst a nation in which the president tries to forcefully order people to stay at home and await their death — as best as they can. However, *We Burned So Bright* keeps circling back to the sinking feeling that even your best can be not enough. Time does not heal all wounds and giving someone space will not necessarily result in a closer relationship. Estrangement and violence are constantly juxtaposed with tender moments between lovers who have spent — and will end — forty years of their life together. In this presentation, I wish to examine how time and space are discussed with regards to the way the apocalypse seems to function as a driving force, both for reexamining and facing one's past, as well as for experiencing the present much more vividly.

Using the time that is left to reach emotional closure is just one of many paths Klune illustrates here, but every single one may lead to a lively discussion about the way temporal and spatial structures are reconfigured in apocalyptic fiction.

Neither Here Nor There: Anarchism as Postmodern Space-Time in the Fiction of Thomas Pynchon and Rachel Kushner

Andra Flatter

This talk investigates how Thomas Pynchon and Rachel Kushner experiment with postmodern forms of time and space to imagine anarchism as a counter-hegemonic utopian politics that resists the historical logics of imperial modernity and neoliberal capitalism. If anarchism is not the prevailing ideology of our historical moment - if it appears perpetually displaced, untimely, or geographically marginal - then where, and when, does anarchism live? *Against the Day* by Thomas Pynchon and *Creation Lake* by Rachel Kushner approach this question by locating anarchism within discontinuous histories and peripheral spaces.

In *Against the Day*, Thomas Pynchon fractures linear history through doubled temporalities, speculative futures, and alternate dimensions, creating chronotopes in which anarchism persists within the cracks of past, present, and future. Airships and subterranean passages, for instance, operate as heterotopic spaces detached from capitalist and nationalist forms of organization, linking anarchism to movement, simultaneity, and resistance to territorial enclosure. Rachel Kushner's *Creation Lake* situates anarchist possibility within networks of secrecy, surveillance, and ecological duration.

Chronotopes and heterotopias emerge through caves, isolated communes, and hidden lines of communication that exist outside neoliberal demands for visibility, productivity, and historical progress.

Drawing on theories of postmodernism (Fredric Jameson), the chronotope (Mikhail Bakhtin), and heterotopia (Michel Foucault), this talk argues that both novels locate anarchism outside conventional historical and political frameworks. In Pynchon and Kushner, anarchism does not appear as a coherent future political order or as a recoverable historical past; instead, it emerges intermittently through marginal spaces, fractured temporalities, and temporary forms of collectivity that resist incorporation into dominant historical narratives. By reconfiguring the relationship between space, time, and ideology, Pynchon and Kushner propose that anarchism survives precisely through its resistance to historical containment, emerging instead in interstitial spaces where alternative forms of collective life remain thinkable.

Editorial Team:

Andra Flatter, Helen Scott and Alec von der Schulenburg

Notes

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