

**15th Annual EUCOR English Trinational MA and PhD Conference**  
**Abstracts and bios**  
**University of Strasbourg, English Department**  
**April 16-17, 2021**



**Friday, April 16**

9.00-9.30: **Connexion and Welcome: Anne Bandry-Scubbi (dean of the Faculty of Foreign Languages, University of Strasbourg) and Monica Manolescu (EUCOR correspondent, English Department, University of Strasbourg)**

9.30-11.00: **3 parallel sessions**

**Session 1 Crossing boundaries**

**Chair: Monika Fludernik**

9.30-10.00 **Patricia Kindlimann** (University of Basel), “A Fugitive Slave’s Visit to the Great Exhibition: *Three Years in Europe* by William Wells Brown” (MA)

**Abstract.** This talk engages with William Wells Brown’s narrative *Three Years in Europe* (1852), which combines abolitionist views with travel descriptions of Europe. Brown’s account related to his visit to the first world fair held in London in 1851 emphasizes both of these elements, since the fact that Brown was an American fugitive slave impacted the way in which he perceived the Great Exhibition. On the one hand, the talk will investigate a performance of Brown and his friends related to an American sculpture representing slavery, which reveals Brown’s activism on behalf of the abolition of slavery. On the other hand, this talk will show how the international atmosphere of the Great Exhibition provided an attractive and inclusive setting for Brown, who faced severe discrimination due to his skin color in the United States. On a larger scale, Brown’s account of the Great Exhibition in *Three Years in Europe* is an interesting example for the transnational dimensions of nineteenth-century abolitionism.

**Bio.** Patricia Kindlimann is an MA student in English and French literature and linguistics at the University of Basel. Her research focuses on American and English literary history. She wrote her Master’s thesis on three American slave narratives. ([patricia.kindlimann@stud.unibas.ch](mailto:patricia.kindlimann@stud.unibas.ch))

10.00-10.30 **Franca Leitner** (University of Freiburg), “The Gentleman and His Club in the State of the Nation Novel” (MA)

**Abstract.** This paper examines the concepts of the English gentleman and the gentleman’s club in Anthony Trollope’s novel *The Way We Live Now* (*TWWLN*, 1874) and Ford Madox Ford’s tetralogy *Parade’s End* (*PE*, 1924-1928). Both works can be categorized as State of the Nation novels, presenting a diagnosis of the English nation in times of crises. In both, the concept of the “English gentleman” as the embodiment of England’s cultural, social, and political elite plays a crucial role – as well as the supposedly favourite dwelling-place of the gentleman: his club. This paper will argue that while *TWWLN* mourns the loss of ‘true’ gentlemen, the dutiful country squires of England, it nevertheless recognizes that the time of the gentleman has come to an end. Ford’s *PE* goes a step further, dismissing the concept

altogether as thoroughly outdated and the novel's protagonist Christopher Tietjens, the 'last gentleman', even faces social exclusion as a result of his anachronistic moral behaviour. Interestingly, neither Tietjens nor the one true gentleman in *TWWLN*, Roger Carbury, are, as one might expect of them, clubmen. This paper will show that the realm of the club, traditionally seen as an institution upholding social standards and constituting the English elite, instead encourages criminal behaviour and malevolent rumours, as well as fostering fraternity culture. London clubland as presented by Trollope and Ford is filled with fraudulent speculators, irresponsible gamblers, and gossiping businessmen. Clubs can therefore be said to epitomize the concerns of both State of the Nation novels regarding England's male elite and the term "gentleman's club" becomes an oxymoron.

**Bio.** Franca Leitner, Masters student in British and North American Cultural Studies at Freiburg University. BSc (Psychology, Düsseldorf) and BA (English and History, Freiburg). Currently writing her Master thesis on the Irish State of the Nation in Tana French's Dublin Murder Squad series.

10.30-11.00 **Ludivine Naretto** (University of Strasbourg), "Androgyny and Bisexuality in Michael Cunningham's *The Hours* and *By Nightfall*" (MA)

**Abstract.** The relationship—and the distinction—between androgyny and bisexuality is a lot more complex than it seems when talking about gender and sexual identities. To study these ambiguities, I chose to analyse comparatively two of Michael Cunningham's novels—the award-winning rewriting of *Mrs. Dalloway*, entitled *The Hours* and the more recent *By Nightfall*—and their main themes through close textual readings. Androgyny, the perfect balance of masculine and feminine, the utopic harmony in the self, will be compared to bisexuality, sometimes mocked, often neglected and stigmatized even among the LGBTQ+ community. Even though they first shared the same meaning—namely an even mix of masculine and feminine features or of masculine and feminine characteristics—the two notions have become increasingly complex and even contradictory as their definitions evolved throughout the twentieth century.

The purpose of this research is to investigate what these two notions tell us about gender and sexual orientation today and to rehabilitate bisexuality, by studying Cunningham's style, his distinctive way of writing and his unique view on borders—between traditional and queer literature, between men and women, between the self and others—that he is always blurring and shifting. I will also comment on the pastiche of Woolf that he operates through the complex motif of the mirror (as an object, as a literary device, as a symbol) that enlightens the shift in paradigms that I find in Cunningham's work, and that I see as a way to reinvent identity more fluidly.

**Bio.** Ludivine Naretto has been studying in Strasbourg University for two years. From 2016 to 2019, she attended a literary "classe préparatoire" in Nancy where she specialized in English and first became interested in contemporary English literature. She is now studying gender and literature under the supervision of Lara Delage-Toriel. ([ludivine.naretto@etu.unistra.fr](mailto:ludivine.naretto@etu.unistra.fr))

## Session 2 Gendered representations and beyond

**Chair: Rémi Vuillemin**

9.30-10.00 **Justine Hilbert** (UHA Mulhouse), “The Character of Guinevere and Its Evolution in the Arthurian Legend: the role of the social context” (MA)

**Abstract.** First mentioned in Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *History of Britain*, the character of Guinevere is undeniably one of the best-known characters of the Arthurian legend. As the wife of the king of Camelot, Arthur Pendragon, and as the lover of Lancelot, the knight of the Round Table, Guinevere appears in most retellings of the legend: whether they be in poetry, novels, movies, or even TV series. Her role and place in the story, however, has not always been the same. Throughout the centuries and the many retellings, she went from being in the background of the story and relegated to her love affair to slowly having more importance given to her character, until she became the heroine of her own story. For example, writers in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, while still talking about the love affair, started to also get interested in the character of Guinevere herself, her feelings, her reasons, and her thoughts.

A parallel can be drawn between the evolution of the character and the changes made in how women were seen and treated, and told to behave in the time period when the retelling was made, which will be the topic of this paper. To illustrate my points, I will use the same works I am currently studying for my Master’s research: *Le Morte D’Arthur* by Sir Thomas Malory (1485), *Idylls of the King* by Lord Alfred Tennyson (1859), *The Once and Future King* by T.H. White (1958), *The Last Enchantment* by Mary Stewart (1979), *The Mists of Avalon* by Marion Zimmer Bradley (1983), *The Dragon Queen* by Alice Borchardt (2001), BBC’s *Merlin* (2008-2012) and *The Guinevere Deception* by Kiersten White (2019).

**Bio.** After getting my degree in English Literature and Civilisation at the University of Upper Alsace in Mulhouse, I decided to continue my studies there and do a Master Research degree. Being interested in the Arthurian legend, during my first year I worked on comparing the key moments of the legend in T.H. White’s *The Once and Future King* and BBC’s *Merlin*. Now, in my second year, I decided to take a deeper look into the character of Guinevere through some reinterpretations. ([justine.hilbert@uha.fr](mailto:justine.hilbert@uha.fr))

10.00-10.30 **Florence Lötscher** (University of Basel), “A Spatial Reading of Eden Robinson’s *Monkey Beach*” (MA)

**Abstract.** Eden Robinson’s *Monkey Beach* (2000) follows Lisamarie Hill on a quest to find her younger brother Jimmy, who is lost at sea. The narrative alternates between Lisa’s journey to Monkey Beach to find Jimmy, and her reminiscences of growing up in the village of Kitimaat, British Columbia. The novel can be considered an Indigenous postcolonial Gothic novel. In *Monkey Beach* landscape plays a crucial role for the development of the story; Robinson highlights how the relationship of the Haisla community with the land has been complicated by colonization. *Monkey Beach* places First Nations voices front and center, challenging prevailing images of invisible, marginalized and victimized Indigenous subjects without for all that denying the serious effects of the legacy of colonialism. Unsurprisingly, Michèle Lacombe

has recently argued that it is necessary to include “a diversity of methodologies within Indigenous literary theory” to account for such complex interrelations (Lacombe 253). In this vein, this paper brings together Gerald Vizenor’s concept of ‘survivance’ with postcolonial and feminist spatial theory in order to trace how the spatial construction of the Haisla landscape in *Monkey Beach* gives voice to the ‘lost’/colonized land of First Nations.

**Bio.** Florence Lötscher holds a BA in History and English from Friedrich Schiller University Jena and is currently completing her MA in Literary Studies at the University of Basel. Her MA thesis, entitled “Mapping the Spaces of Black Women in Nnedi Okorafor’s *Binti Trilogy* and *Who Fears Death*”, discusses postcolonialism, feminist geography and posthumanism with regard to afrofuturistic worldbuilding. Her main research interests are current African American and Native American/First Nations literature. ([florence.loetscher@stud.unibas.ch](mailto:florence.loetscher@stud.unibas.ch))

10.30-11.00 **Clotilde Daumas** (University of Strasbourg), “The Feminist Shift in Le Guin’s *Earthsea Cycle*: Towards a Renewal of Fantasy?” (MA)

**Abstract.** The first book of the *Earthsea Cycle*, *A Wizard of Earthsea* (1968) was published as a coming-of-age story and immediately entered the canon of Western children’s literature. Shortly afterwards, *The Tombs of Atuan* (1970) and *The Farthest Shore* (1972) ensured that the *Earthsea* trilogy became one of the touchstones of the fantasy genre. The original trilogy was then followed, much later, by *Tehanu* (1990), *Tales from Earthsea* and *The Other Wind* (2001). The three later books are still set in the Earthsea universe, but they are markedly different from the original trilogy as they are written from a feminist perspective.

My research focuses on the feminist shift introduced by the second trilogy and how it reshapes not only gender relations, but also the way nature is presented and the way the story is told. Critical literature on the *Earthsea* cycle has examined its links with Campbell’s monomyth, as well as the revision of traditional gender roles in the second trilogy. Fewer critics have engaged in an ecocritical reading of *Earthsea*, and fewer even have focused on the changes that the feminist shift entails in terms of genre. My thesis examines the interconnection between gender, nature, and genre with the aim to demonstrate that, from *Tehanu* onwards, Le Guin offers a reinvention of the fantasy genre by purposefully making it feminist.

**Bio.** After graduating with a Bachelor’s degree in English, Clotilde Daumas spent a year in Belfast as a teaching assistant. Her research focuses on the politics of the fantasy genre and its evolution, especially in relation to gender studies. ([clotilde.daumas@etu.unistra.fr](mailto:clotilde.daumas@etu.unistra.fr))

### Session 3 Women: cultural roles and memorials

**Chair: Bernd Kortmann**

9.30-10.00 **Rahaf Alhawarna** (UHA Mulhouse), "Victims or Fallen Women? Prostitutes in Dickens and in the Victorian Press" (MA)

**Abstract.** In traditional Victorian society, prostitution was condemned and punished. The state was not lenient with prostitutes and the Victorian media associated them with crime, sexual perversion, and illegal behaviour. As a result, the state regulated labour activities of prostitution and implemented regulations to "clear the streets." Morality, ethics, religion, police brutality, and legal implications were common subjects when the illegitimate trade was discussed, but Dickens sought to change that narrative. He did not conform to the vindictive attitude of society towards prostitutes. Instead, he sought to understand them. Dickens actively participated in activities of the Urania Cottage to understand "fallenness" from the perspective of prostitutes and not only the Victorian press. He saw these 'fallen' women for who they really were, misguided individuals in need of empathy and social clemency.

My talk about this controversial topic in the Victorian Age features the different views of the press and contrasts them to Dickens as an independent writer. I will also show the role of illustrations in effecting the Victorian public awareness in both, Dickens novels and in the Victorian press.

**Bio.** Rahaf Alhawarna obtained her bachelor degree in English Literature from the English department at Damascus University. She insisted to complete her studies in English after moving on to France and studied Licence 3 at the University of Haute-Alsace, Mulhouse. She is currently a MA2 student in English at UHA. Her Master's thesis is entitled "Social Problems in Dickens and in the Victorian Press." Her research focuses on comparing Dickens novels (and the illustrations to his novels) with press articles/pictures on Victorian social problems. ([rahaf.alhawarna@uha.fr](mailto:rahaf.alhawarna@uha.fr))

10.00-10.30 **Marie Reeb** (University of Strasbourg), "The shaping of the Victorian ideal woman: the deconstruction of the "gaze" through nineteenth-century British paintings" (MA)

**Abstract.** Victorian England was a gender-based hierarchical society driven by norms. From the Fallen Woman to the Angel-of-the-House, middle-class ideals of respectability and purity shaped the minds and confined women. Ideologies and jurisdiction supported this patriarchal system which did not offer many possibilities for them.

Pictorial representations of that period are clearly marked by these archetypes, these standards, these expectations towards women in male-dominated society; they are then a great means to understand what was at stake in facts, but also in the intellect. The artistic scene was then essentially male dominated, so we can wonder what were the recurring patterns in painting women, but also how the Victorian conceptions of gender shaped the artist's vision, and most importantly, how are women defined through the gaze of the painter?

This thesis is an attempt to study a corpus of emblematic paintings in relation to Victorian standards of femininity, sexuality and assigned roles, but also an attempt to understand the relationship between social conventions and the creating process.

**Bio.** Marie Reeb specializes in British civilization. She is interested in visual studies, feminist theory, art history, and intends to apply for a PhD in the United States, where she is currently candidate for a Francophone studies master's degree and a teaching assistant. ([marie.reeb@etu.unistra.fr](mailto:marie.reeb@etu.unistra.fr))

10.30-11.00 **Léna Remy-Kovach** (University of Freiburg), “‘The Only Color the Spirits Can See’: Red in Artistic Installations Memorializing Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls” (PhD)

**Abstract.** In the United States and Canada, Indigenous women are the group most at risk for domestic and/or sexual violence. They experience physical assault at rates far exceeding women of other ethnicities and locations. Starting in Canada, the term of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) came to encompass thousands of cases of violent deaths and suspicious disappearances.

Indigenous artists and collectives are finding avenues for community healing and social change in art. For the traveling installation *Walking With Our Sisters*, 2000 pairs of moccasin vamp (the beaded top piece) are placed on the floor, on bright red carpeting. For *The REDress Project*, Métis artist Jamie Black hangs mismatched red dresses in public spaces such as museum gardens and university campuses. *Red Embers* displays red banners, embellished with jingle cones and ribbons, in Allans Gardens, Toronto. These experiential exhibits require incomers to walk the path of loss. Surrounded by unfinished, empty pieces of clothing, visitors envision the impact of the missing women's absence.

Red is the only color the spirits can see. It is also the color of blood, and therefore represents the interconnection of human lives while also alluding to the violence perpetrated against Indigenous women. In my presentation, I will examine the significance of the color red in these installations, and explain how instrumental these collaborative projects have been for developing public awareness of systemic violence against Indigenous women. I will then reflect upon their function in the processes of memorializing victims' lives, as well as haunting North American public spaces and collective memory.

**Bio.** Léna Remy-Kovach is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Freiburg. She holds B.A.s in both English and Italian Studies and an M.A. in American History from the Université de Strasbourg, as well as an M.A. in Indigenous and Canadian Studies from Carleton University, Canada. Her doctoral thesis focuses on strategies for healing in contemporary Horror and Gothic Indigenous literature. She created #IndigenousReads, a monthly colloquium dedicated to contemporary North American Indigenous fiction, for which she received a 2-year Adolf-Häuser development grant. She recently won an MLA Graduate Student award and the CAITY Prize at the NeMLA annual conference for her paper “Creating and Maintaining Support for Students' Mental Health during Online Teaching.” ([lenaremykovach@gmail.com](mailto:lenaremykovach@gmail.com))

11.00-11.15 **Break**

11.15-12.15: **3 parallel sessions**

#### **Session 4 Petroculture and energy**

**Chair: Christiane Schlote**

11.15-11.45 **Salome Moser** (University of Basel), “Gendered Spaces in Petro-Urbanism” (MA)

**Abstract.** Oil literally fuels the world; it provides energy for the functioning of the global economy as well as our everyday lives. The rising awareness of climate change, energy issues and the non-renewability of oil has led to a number of cultural productions and texts that can be united under the genre of petrofiction. As locations of fossil fuel extraction and nodal points of the oil market, literary oil cities offer themselves as productive objects of study to investigate petroculture. These narratives of petro-urbanism problematise the extraction of fossil fuels and draw attention to the experiences made in oil cities which have long been neglected in literature.

Next to shaping the cityscape and determining the life in the city with unpredictable boom and bust cycles, the oil industry divides the cities’ societies along gender lines. In this paper, I investigate petro-urban gendered spaces, roles and relations in Don Gillmor’s *Long Change* (2015), Jennifer Haigh’s *Heat and Light* (2016) and Elizabeth Wetmore’s *Valentine* (2020). Gendered oil spaces within the city demonstrate how women are professionally excluded from the oil economy. As a consequence, traditional gender roles are reproduced and men hold the monopoly of power in the industry.

**Bio.** Salome Moser is an MA student in English and History at the University of Basel. In February, she submitted her MA thesis with the title “Narrating Petro-Urbanisms: Oil Towns in the North American Novels *Long Change* (2015), *Heat and Light* (2016) and *Valentine* (2020).” Her research interests include postcolonial studies, energy humanities and petrofiction. ([salome.moser@stud.unibas.ch](mailto:salome.moser@stud.unibas.ch))

11.45-12.15 **Meg McGill** (University of Freiburg), “#TwitterFuels: Political Stance Taking in Energy Companies’ Computer Mediated Communication” (MA)

**Abstract.** Corporations use social media to directly reach, advertise to, and influence the consumer. The nature of social media and computer-mediated communication allows corporations to interact directly with consumers in online communities in the same ways as other users. Social media is used as a tool to disseminate information directly to large masses of a speech community, influencing corporate reputations and public opinion surrounding political issues. This research addresses how US-based corporations in the energy sector linguistically establish political stances in online communities regarding climate change issues. Tweets from fossil fuel and sustainable energy corporations are compared with tweets from US senators about climate change. The type of post, community engagement, and use of politically charged phrases, hashtags, or references to political events in the tweets will be

discussed as well as the syntax used in the posts. This study will seek to address the following research questions:

In which ways do fossil fuel companies, sustainable energy companies, and those participating in both sectors use Twitter to engage with the consumer?

How do energy sector corporations establish political stances on Twitter?

How do corporations spread information about climate change on Twitter through searchable talk?

Are there variations in syntax in the tweets of fossil fuel companies, sustainable energy companies, and those participating in both sectors?

**Bio.** Meg McGill is a fourth semester student at the University of Freiburg, Germany seeking a Masters of English Language and Linguistics with an emphasis in discourse and communications. Originally from South Carolina in the USA, Meg moved to Germany five years ago to pursue a job as an English teacher. Whenever possible, Meg is found outside hiking, biking, or reading a book under a tree. ([gmmcgill@gmail.com](mailto:gmmcgill@gmail.com))

## **Session 5 Drama: identity and experience**

**Chair: Stephanie Lethbridge**

11.15-11.45 **Donna Marie E. Tomlinson** (University of Freiburg), “Staged! Representations of Offspring Salience in 20th-Century American Drama” (PhD)

**Abstract.** Using an intersection of Childhood Studies and Social Identity Theory, both based in Sociology; Family Systems Theory, based in Psychology and Family Therapy; and Identity Theory based in Psychology, I will analyse the following six 20<sup>th</sup> Century pieces of American drama: *Death of a Salesman*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *Our Town*, *Mulatto*, and *The Quintessential Image*. Although each of the aforementioned areas of theory deals with various personal and social identities and the salience of one or more at any given time, there seems to be a significant gap regarding the salience of an ‘adult offspring’ identity. This research will examine examples of what will be referred to as ‘Parent-Centring Offspring’ or ‘PCO’ salience, at once identifying and defining this type of identity and its salience, as well as outcomes resulting from it. As ‘the Family’ is the primary socialising structure for most, and it is that which prepares one for integration into other social structures and institutions, the nuclear family will also be examined as one of Louis Althusser’s Ideological State Apparatuses, or ISAs. Due to the shared experience of family between the reader and each of the works, the identities which are salient during interactions between adult family members proves to be a productive point of theoretical analysis. The written forms of each drama will be examined with special emphasis to include codes of communication and signification, as well as stage directions, which are only fully accessible to the readers, not the viewers, of the plays.

**Bio.** Donna Marie E. Tomlinson, M.A. in English Literature and Literary Theory from the University of Freiburg, is an American of Jamaican heritage who has lived in Germany for 23 years. She began her pursuit of higher education while raising three children as a single parent and is currently in the third and final year of her doctoral candidacy. While completing research for her PhD thesis, in order to support herself, she has been working as an online English teacher for the Chinese company VIPKID. ([dmtomlinson@arcor.de](mailto:dmtomlinson@arcor.de))

11.45-12.15 **Sarah Busch** (University of Basel), “Feeling Spectators: Theatrical Reception, Affect, and Sarah Kane’s *Crave*” (PhD)

**Abstract.** In my PhD project that combines theatre and audience studies with affect theory, I investigate how spectators’ affective reactions shape their reception of a performance. The project’s first case study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic and consists of post-show interviews with spectators of a socially distant performance of Sarah Kane’s *Crave*. The analysis of the responses showed different attitudes towards livestreamed theatre and in situ performance: while a livestream may be deemed inferior or less engaging than live theatre performance, spectators do establish an affective connection to the theatrical work it (re)presents.

To illustrate this argument, the paper will present a first analysis of five semi-structured interviews that I conducted over Zoom after the run of *Crave* at Chichester Festival Theatre, Oct 28<sup>th</sup> to Nov 8<sup>th</sup>. The spectators expressed different, sometimes contrasting emotions towards the characters, stage design and Kane’s postdramatic language but also towards the medium of the livestream itself. Lastly, the paper will present some discursive strategies that spectators used to make sense of the performance emotionally and assess it critically: Which character did they feel most connected to and why, which moments in the play were most memorable to them and how did the play’s themes affect them personally? Overall, the results of the case study suggest that affect can be a valuable tool to analyse spectators’ responses to a performance. Also, spectator interviews as a method contribute to the democratisation of theatrical discourses by speaking to spectators rather than for them.

**Bio.** Sarah Busch is a PhD student at the Universities of Freiburg and Basel with a teaching degree in English and Spanish Philology. Her PhD project combines English Literary and Cultural Studies with Performance and Audience Studies as it investigates how affective theatre experiences shape spectators’ understanding of text and performance. She teaches Literary Studies in Basel and is an active member of Uni Freiburg’s student drama group. ([sarah.busch@unibas.ch](mailto:sarah.busch@unibas.ch))

## Session 6 Foreign policies

**Chair: Wolfgang Hochbruck**

11.15-11.45 **Lukas Pfeiffer** (University of Basel), “‘There is the Spirit of 1919 all Round’ – Gertrude Bell and the Knotty Question of Arab Self-Determination in Iraq (1916-21)” (MA)

**Abstract.** Between 1919 and 1921, the political future of the former Ottoman provinces in Mesopotamia (and the Middle East) was the subject of intense imperial and supranational debates. Should Iraq be run as a British protectorate, a mandate with limited native responsibilities, or an independent Arab state? Gertrude Bell (1868-1926), best known for her extensive travels in the Middle East and her involvement in the creation of the Iraqi Hashemite Monarchy under British supervision, positioned herself on this debate in private letters and official documents between 1915 and 1921. After initially favouring the construction of a protectorate, she changed her mind in late 1919 to advocate the establishment of a Sunni Arab government led by Feisal bin Hussein under a British mandate veiled as a treaty relationship. Recent scholarship has put this change of heart down to her impressions from personal meetings, her political reassessment of Arab nationalism, and her romanticised perception of Feisal. In addition to these points, this paper emphasises the global-historical dimension in her thinking. Bell understood Iraqi nationalism as part of a wider phenomenon that marked an irrevocable epochal shift in the post-war social and international order and to which Britain had no choice but to adapt.

**Bio.** I am studying History and English in Basel in the sixth semester of my MA. My main research interests are political culture in the High Middle Ages and anything connected to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, such as travel literature, 18<sup>th</sup>-century novels, the British legal systems, and the history of the Swiss Ancien Régime and Helvetic Revolution. ([lukas.pfeiffer@unibas.ch](mailto:lukas.pfeiffer@unibas.ch))

11.45-12.15 **Nazdar Mosa** (UHA Mulhouse), “American Foreign Policy and the Iraqi Kurds: US aid to the Kurdish rebellion, 1972-1975” (MA)

**Abstract.** By the 1970s, the United States of America had denied support of Kurdish rebellions in Iraq several times. Since World War I, the Kurds had been a stateless nation, dispatched across Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria in the aftermath of the various European peace treaties. As Iraqi Kurds repeatedly asserted their self-determination yearnings through rebellions against the Iraqi government, the United States adopted a stance of non-interference, favoring stable relationships with Baghdad. But the US Foreign policy towards the Iraqi Kurds took a sudden shift in 1972. In the context of the Cold War, the US looked at the establishment of friendly alliances between Iraq and the Soviet Union with a suspicious eye. The signature of the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between Iraq and the USSR in April 1972 rang the alarm bells for the US, but also for Iran. Iran and Iraq both trying to assert their sovereignty in the Arab world, each nation picked its powerful ally. As for the Kurds, they would soon find themselves involved in a geopolitical entanglement that would allow them to assert once more their desire of autonomy, this time with the tacit support of the United States. It was, however, without realizing the terrible price that Iraqi Kurds would pay for trusting them.

**Bio.** Nazdar Mosa is now a M2 student in English at the UHA, Mulhouse. Her research focuses on the nature of the relationships between the United States, Britain and the Kurds of Iraq since World War I. She is interested in historical and civilizational studies that help understanding today's world. ([nazdar.mosa@uha.fr](mailto:nazdar.mosa@uha.fr))

12.15-13.30 **Lunch**

13.30-14.45 **Keynote address**

**Lianne Habinek (University of Strasbourg Institute for Advanced Study): “The Bookish Brain: How to read the Renaissance brain”**

**Abstract.** Flap anatomies are one of the early modern period's stranger print innovations: they invite the reader to become a paper anatomist by lifting successive layers of the human body, and they popularize contemporary anatomical understanding. Given the centrality of the brain to anatomical and philosophical study, why were there almost no flap representations of the organ? I propose as an artifact a curious example of plagiarism: in the late 17th century, a revised English edition of Johann Remmelin's resplendent flap-book *Captoptrum microcosmicum* appeared in London, with new (miniaturized) pictures of the brain pilfered directly from Thomas Willis's and Christopher Wren's *Cerebri anatome* (England's first dedicated neuroscientific text). How these two texts collided raises important questions about the relationship between scientific advances and print culture. With Wren's iconic drawings of the brain, readers of the *Captoptrum* could “read” the brain like a book.

**Bio.** Lianne Habinek is currently a Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study at the University of Strasbourg. She is the author of *The Subtle Knot: Early Modern British Literature and the Birth of Neuroscience* (McGill-Queen's UP, 2018); her work has also appeared in journals such as *Textual Practice*, *Shakespeare Studies*, and *Configurations*. She has held fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities, Wellesley College, and the Wellcome, Huntington, Folger Shakespeare, and Yale University Medical Libraries. Her current book project connects early modern experiments in interactive paper engineering to modern cognitive studies in reading practices.

14.45-15.00 **Break**

15.00-16.30 **3 parallel sessions**

### **Session 7 Contested authorities**

**Chair: Sieglinde Lemke**

15.00-15.30 **Sarah Colinet** (University of Strasbourg), “Irish Cinema and Teen Film: youth rebellion as a way to question Irish society at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century” (MA)

**Abstract.** While Irish literature has long been the subject of academic study, Irish cinema has generally received little attention from academics. Due to its fairly recent development, many of its works remain unstudied; however, I want to show that it must be considered as a relevant tool to discuss questions of youth and identity in a country struggling to define itself at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The three films selected for this research are *The Commitments* by Alan Parker (1991), *The Last Bus Home* by Johnny Gogan (1997) and the more recent *Sing Street* by John Carney (2016). Their plots share the common narrative of young Dublin bands striving for success in 1980s Dublin, at a time when the nation was burdened by a severe economic recession. The three films belong to the teen film genre, which has often been dismissed as immature or perceived as misrepresenting what adolescence is truly like. However, despite its light tone with a focus on adolescents and their dreams of fame, the corpus deals with more serious issues at stake in Irish society at the time.

In this presentation, I will give a definition of the genre of teen film and the way in which its main tropes are developed in the material selected; I will then look at how societal issues such as the erosion of the traditional family and the decline of the Catholic Church in Ireland are tackled through youth rebellion in these narratives.

**Bio.** Sarah Colinet spent two years of Licence LLCE Anglais in Troyes before moving to Ireland for her third year, where she studied at the Institute of Art, Design and Technology in Dublin. She is now a student in the Monde Anglophone MA programme at the University of Strasbourg and specializes in civilization and film studies. ([sarah.colinet@etu.unistra.fr](mailto:sarah.colinet@etu.unistra.fr))

15.30-16.00 **Jennifer Howard** (University of Freiburg), “Killing the Joy of the American Dream: Uncovering the Hidden Unhappiness of the Original American Dream of James Truslow Adams” (MA)

**Abstract.** A routine discussion of the American Dream in public discourse usually starts by reminding Americans that the original was an anti-materialist, inclusive dream of upward mobility for all Americans, conceived by James Truslow Adams. The discussion typically centers on a call to eschew the contemporary, consumeristic iteration of the American Dream and to return to Adam’s original as described in his 1931 work, *The Epic of America*. This paper shows, however, that a review of Adam’s Epic reveals a text glittering with shards of racism towards African Americans that litter what could have been a fairly pristine landscape, only offering insight as to how America continues to be so racially divided. This paper will argue that Epic is what Sarah Ahmed calls a “history of happiness” for white Americans, applying her

theory that happiness can be used as a societal force “to justify oppression” (Ahmed 2). Adams’ “Dream” in this light will be shown to imply a duty to white Americans to unite around a past that forgets “violence, asymmetry, or force” against African Americans. By covering over unhappiness with happiness, Adams’ Epic is a work that supports and sustains racism against African Americans.

**Bio.** Jennifer Howard is an American MA student in British and North American Cultural Studies at the University of Freiburg. She left her career as a corporate trainer in finance in the US to pursue her research interests in Cultural Memory, Post-Capitalism, and Education. ([howardjenniferm@outlook.com](mailto:howardjenniferm@outlook.com))

16.00-16.30 **Florian Baslé-Desjardins** (UHA Mulhouse), “‘I told’em Harlem Hospital givin’ beds out’: an introduction to North American battle rap” (MA)

**Abstract.** Rap as a genre has gone through ups and downs, starting from the streets of New York on the east coast to becoming one of the most popular genres worldwide, in only a couple of decades. Rap has constantly evolved and pushed itself to new heights, whether it is through drama and controversies, or musical quality and complexity. To try to reach the pole position in the music charts, rap has been influenced by other genres, like pop, rock, or even metal. Whereas some claim that rap has started to “devolve,” others claim that rap is peaking, and that we are living in the golden days of rap. That is why I believe it is important to take a look at how rap started, at its origins in battle rap. In this presentation, I will give an introduction to battle rap and show how this type, the oldest form of rap, has remained strong and alive for decades, hidden within the shadow of mainstream rap. This presentation will discuss the origin of the concept of battling, and how it has evolved through the years, to reshape the hip-hop culture in ground-breaking ways. The intense competition the battlers engage in with each other is reshaping the standards of rap as well.

**Bio.** Florian Baslé-Desjardins holds a BA in English language and literature, and will soon complete his MA degree in Research at the University of Mulhouse (UHA). He became a fan of battle rap years ago, and has been following the scene ever since. During his studies in Mulhouse, he has developed an interest in cognitive linguistics, especially figurative language, and he wants to apply the knowledge acquired here to battle rap. ([florian.basle-desjardins@uha.fr](mailto:florian.basle-desjardins@uha.fr))

## Session 8 Contemporary literature: migrations and reversals

**Chair: Gwen Cressman**

15.00-15.30 **Aline Wenk** (University of Basel), “Goat-Songs’: Elements of Death, Violence and Trauma in Salman Rushdie’s *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*” (MA)

**Abstract.** Salman Rushdie’s *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, which chronicles the epic story of the love triangle between two rock’n’roll stars and their photographer friend on their migrant journey from India to the US, includes a plethora of tragic events. These elements of death, violence and trauma come in the shape of literal and metamorphic earthquakes that shake up the lives of the protagonists. The topos of ground, or rather the loss of it, is inscribed in the texture of this novel with Rushdie perpetuating the image of shifting grounds. Through intertextual reference to the Orphic myth, the characters’ migration from East to West is compared to the descent into the underworld. All three protagonists lack stable ground beneath their feet and feel disoriented due to their migrant experience, which leaves them questioning their sense of belonging. Rushdie’s characters epitomize postcolonial travellers in a world which is in a constant state of flux and where few aspects of life seem stable and dependable.

This paper investigates the abundance of death, violence and trauma Rushdie employs in his novel on the basis of insights from postcolonial and trauma studies, focusing mainly on the novel’s features as a katabatic and metamorphic writing. The tragic elements serve to destabilize the protagonists’ notions of home, belonging and identity in order to underline the novel’s central themes of rootlessness and disorientation in a postcolonial and cosmopolitan world.

**Bio.** Aline Wenk holds a BA in Political Science and English Literature from the University of Zürich as well as an MA in Management, Organisation and Culture from the University of St. Gallen. After three years of working in the reinsurance industry she decided to change career paths and move into the educational sector. She is currently studying for her MA in English and History at the University of Basel and working towards obtaining her High School Teaching Diploma. Her main research interests include Scottish literature and history as well as postcolonial narratives and the genre of crime fiction. ([aline.wenk@stud.unibas.ch](mailto:aline.wenk@stud.unibas.ch))

15.30-16.00 **Imene Abdellaoui** (University of Oran 2, Algeria, visiting scholar, UHA), “Leila Aboulela’s *The Kindness of Enemies* and the Non-Existence of a Physical Home” (PhD)

**Abstract.** The notion of home and its implications for self-definition are vital to the critical debate about Diaspora. Natasha’s journey in *The Kindness of Enemies* complies with Deleuze and Guattari’s (1986) idea that a diasporic individual is ‘deterritorialized’ from a home mentally and emotionally and therefore searching for a new, suitable home in order to be ‘reterritorialized’ again. Salman Rushdie’s essay suggests “Imaginary Homelands” to emphasize that one’s home does not always have to be a real and physical place. And William Safran suggests the existence of “a spiritual, emotional, and/or cultural home that is outside of the *hostland*,” a home that does not necessarily refer to the original homeland.

*The Kindness of Enemies* (2015) asserts that there is a likelihood for migrants to create a spiritual home away from home as a remedy to recover from the psychological and physical displacement caused by the continuous strive for a physical home. While the host country uses a reductive conception of home as being in or of a particular nation in order to marginalize its migrants, Leila Aboulela finds a tentative discourse of home in the narrative of everyday lived experience that captures both characters' locality and their movement from home to exile. She suggests an alternative home where their belonging and identity is preserved. At the same time, her book illustrates that a physical "home" does not exist; only a spiritual home, where cultural, racial, religious differences and modernity are tolerated, is recognized.

**Bio:** Imene Abdellaoui obtained her master's degree in applied linguistics and literary studies from the Doctoral School of English at the ENS Constantine in Algeria. Her Master's thesis is entitled "The other Side through the Looking Glass: Struggle and Relinquishment in Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* and Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea*." She is currently a PhD student in English Language, Literature and Civilization at the University of Oran 2 in Algeria and doing research at the UHA Mulhouse on Fadia Faqir's *My Name is Salma* and Leila Aboulela's *The Kindness of Enemies*. Her research interests include postcolonialism, diaspora studies and Anglo-Arab literature. ([abdellaouiimene@outlook.fr](mailto:abdellaouiimene@outlook.fr))

16.00-16.30 **Aiyada Friedsen** (University of Strasbourg/University of Lyon III), "The aesthetics of reversal in Christopher Moore's world" (PhD)

**Abstract.** The luxuriant world of American novelist Christopher Moore works like an explosive literary cocktail, where extravagant stories using fantasy and humor will quickly make the readers lose their bearings. In the *Pine Cove* series (*Practical Demonkeeping*, *The Lust Lizard of Melancholy Cove*, and *The Stupidest Angel*), the corpus under scrutiny, one discovers the adventures of a mischievous demon who enjoys human flesh and riding on freeways, and who gets chased after with flour; a Godzilla-like lizard which lands in California and mistakes a fuel truck for his female counterpart, therefore causing a massive explosion while trying to mate; and archangel Raziel who fails to make a wish come true and accidentally brings an entire graveyard back to life for Christmas. However, amidst those seemingly chaotic diegeses, the author's topsy-turvy world brings out a full-fledged aesthetics of reversal, which goes beyond the mere disruption of the human world by quirky, supernatural figures. The breathtaking adventures which often outbid each other in terms of surprise somehow have the readers ponder sensitive issues of the real world by oddly subverting their knowledge. Moore employs numerous strategies: switches of narrative viewpoints, comic relief, and break-ups in the structure of the novel, all the while borrowing from classic literature, religious tenets, or traditional motifs such as madness. Humor is yet left to be examined more intently, notably through linguistic theories in order to determine how it precisely contributes to delivering a reversal effect in the narration.

**Bio.** Aiyada Friedsen is a Ph.D. student in American literature at University Jean Moulin – Lyon III and a teaching assistant in the Department of Anglophone Studies at the University of Strasbourg. ([friedsen@unistra.fr](mailto:friedsen@unistra.fr))

## Session 9 Digital games and virtual spaces

**Chair: Léna Remy-Kovach**

15.00-15.30 **Merve Ardali** (UHA Mulhouse), “Zombie Theory and *The Walking Dead*” (MA)

**Abstract.** “Why not musicals? Or romantic comedies? Why zombies, of all things?” one might ask (Kyle William Bishop). The idea of reanimated corpses is monstrously exciting enough. However, what makes zombies so appealing and popular in pop culture is something deeper. From the emergence of zombies up until today, zombies have been used as useful metaphors to discuss diverse phenomena. As *Washington Post* journalist Daniel Drezner points out, the thing that truly makes zombie concept worthy of academic study is how the zombie narratives grip our attention by focusing on the most oppressed societal fears such as slavery, racism, capitalism, diseases, loss of values and death.

In this presentation, I will introduce the zombie concept starting from the origin of the zombies; spiritual practice of Vodou religion—not the black magic as depicted by Hollywood. Then I will show highlights of zombie representations from Haitian traditions to American popular culture as illustrated in literature and TV/cinema fiction in order to discuss how the zombie concept and its metaphorical meanings have changed during years in line with the changing world events.

**Bio.** Merve Ardali holds a BA in English Language and Literature and is currently writing her master’s thesis in the English department of University of Upper Alsace. She developed a great interest in zombie fictions and post-apocalyptic narratives since her first encounter with the TV show *The Walking Dead* in her university years, which later has become the inspiration for the topic of her master’s thesis. ([merve.ardali@uha.fr](mailto:merve.ardali@uha.fr))

15.30-16.00 **Kübra Aksay** (University of Freiburg), “‘Escape to the Office’: An Analysis of Contemporary Digital Games with Stories about Labor” (MA)

**Abstract.** Digital games, “as extensions of drama and narrative” (Frasca 2001), have been gaining increasing academic interest in Cultural Studies over the last two decades. Due to their representations of virtual spaces and their ability to allow their audiences to perform various roles in those spaces, digital games are often associated with *escapism*. While other narrative media can also offer absorption into a fictional world, games are not only escapist because they are works of fiction, but also because of the “common perception of play and games as opposite of seriousness and work” (Calleja 2010). However, if virtual environments are designed to be a form of escape from everyday life, boredom, or environments that the players are grounded in, it is difficult to consider the non-navigable and lonely office spaces in some of the recent titles such as *Her Story* (2015), *Papers, Please* (2013) and *Orwell* (2016), as popular images of a space many players dream about escaping to.

This study aims to analyze how representations of constrained environments and stories about labor can be attractive and engaging for the audiences of digital games. The study focuses on setting and narrative themes in digital games about office work. The

concepts of familiarity with certain spaces through “transmedial storytelling” (Jenkins 2011) and *presence* of the audience in the actual and virtual space at the same time are discussed, in order to show how the themes of work and responsibility, and restricted workspaces can create an engaging interactive storytelling experience, in a medium that is known for providing freedom and entertainment.

**Bio.** Kübra Aksay studied linguistics and philology at Hacettepe and Uppsala Universities. She just finished her M.A. thesis in British and North American Cultural Studies, and graduated from the University of Freiburg. Her research interests include game studies, narratology, and heritage studies. ([kubraaksay@gmail.com](mailto:kubraaksay@gmail.com))

16.00-16.30 **Sid Campe** (UHA Mulhouse), “*Odi et Labora: American Virtual Communities and Social Isolation*” (MA)

**Abstract.** “Male liberation seeks to aid in destroying the sex role stereotypes that regard ‘being a man’ and ‘being a woman’ as statuses that must be achieved through proper behavior. People need not take on restrictive roles to establish their sexual identity.” These were the words of sociologist Jack Sawyer, published in the journal *Liberation* in the summer of 1970, describing a hopeful future for men and women through the Men’s Liberation Movement, couched in the language and viewpoints of second-wave feminism.

The MLM was short-lived and split into opposing branches, pro- and anti-feminist. The anti-feminist branch developed its own vocabulary and theories, established political outreach agencies, and fought for Men’s Rights in an expression of aggrieved entitlement. The Internet age meant that this point of view could reach more younger men as it was diffused through a loose collection of websites, blogs, and social media platforms called “The Manosphere.”

This presentation will focus on one group within the Manosphere, *Men Going Their Own Way* (MGTOW) on the social news and forum website *Reddit*. Unlike some of the more socially visible groups (*Involuntary Celibates*, or Incels, being the prime example), MGTOW members posit a complete separation of society through a process called “going monk.” By co-opting and reactivating the cultural image of the monk, MGTOW members operate within a virtual “cloister,” as their beliefs are reinforced through interactions with other “brothers.” This produces an echo chamber effect that promotes increasingly toxic and violent language.

**Bio.** Sid Campe is a Belgian-American who studied at University of Northern Colorado, receiving a double bachelor’s in American History and French Cultural Studies in 2018. His master’s research at the UHA integrates interdisciplinary theories and viewpoints to explore the development of virtual communities and vocabulary. ([sid.campe@uha.fr](mailto:sid.campe@uha.fr))

**Saturday, April 17**

9.00-10.30: 2 parallel sessions

**Session 1 The body, nature, organicity**

**Chair: Ridvan Askin**

9.00-9.30 **Michaela Frey** (University of Basel), “Bodily Encounters: Nature and Embodiment in British Poetry (2000-2017)” (PhD)

**Abstract.** The talk will give an overview of my ideas for a dissertation project which is still at an early stage. My project adds to a vibrant conversation in contemporary literary studies about the challenging nature of nature poetry in the twenty-first century. Due to the extensive exploitation and destruction of the environment, the experienced alienation of humans from nature has recently reached a critical point. In response, contemporary nature poetry projects alternative viewpoints that go beyond anthropocentric conceptualizations of the human-nature relation. Yet, authors face a dilemma: How to craft a language that does justice to our times of environmental crisis without falling back on mere idealising illusions?

My project explores British poetry by Alice Oswald, Sinéad Morrissey, Kathleen Jamie and Ruth Padel from the year 2000 onwards. Investigating how these texts re-establish the connections between humankind and nature, it sketches the contours of a new language for nature in the Anthropocene. Appropriating the insights of theoretical considerations from “Ecofeminism”, “New Materialism” and phenomenology, the project focuses on the poetic moments of encounter between human and non-human bodies as an experience of common corporeality. Drawing on conceptions of materiality, the emphasis on human and non-human corporeality offers poets a different take on nature and a renewed scrutiny of conceptions of nature as mere ‘Other’. Accordingly, it also examines to what extent a materialistic approach closes the gap between language and nature.

**Bio.** Michaela Frey works as a research assistant at the University of Basel’s Department of English. She graduated in “English Literature and Culture” and “Comparative Literature” from the University of Munich and University College Cork. She went on to complete her MA in “European Literatures and Cultures” at the University of Freiburg. Since April 2020, she has been working on a dissertation project on contemporary British nature poetry in times of climate crisis. ([michaela.frey@unibas.ch](mailto:michaela.frey@unibas.ch))

9.30-10.00 **Mikheili Toria** (University of Strasbourg), “Apprehending the Organic in the first half of the twentieth century; Davidson, Jeffers and Pound” (MA)

**Abstract.** My chief goal is to inquire into the understudied and overlooked notion of organicism. Organicism makes two claims: that a thing is made up of interdependent parts, just like a body is made up of its constituent organs and a society of its constituent social roles; and that such a thing (an organic whole, as we call it) is naturally ordered, self-(re)generating and auto-telic i.e. alive.

According to Raymond Williams, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, *organic* and *mechanical* were quasi-synonyms. However, through major breakthroughs in the fields of natural history, biology and chemistry, the distinction between the two was made first in Germany, especially in the post-Kantian Naturphilosophie. The notion later migrated over to the British Isles through Coleridge and Carlyle. Coleridge distinguished organic and inorganic bodies; in the organic 'the whole is everything and the parts are nothing', while in the inorganic 'the whole is nothing more than a collection of the individual parts'.

My inquiry is not limited to theory but touches upon praxis as well. I see organicism, more broadly, as a worldview that people of conservative mold, often without even knowing it, intone as a rallying cry against the looming threat of "mechanization"; i.e. by an appeal to nature they tend to mean a dynamic, spontaneous and continuous development of the organic whole and the ecosystem of its parts, not hindered by artificial, external forces.

Donald Davidson, Robinson Jeffers and Ezra Pound are all American poets. I chose the framework of poetry for the present inquiry because poetry and organicism were always tightly intertwined. This is for three reasons: firstly because a poet is an inalienable part of a society; secondly, because a poem can be viewed as some sort of an organism in its own right, the principle of organic unity being laid out by Aristotle in *Poetics*; thirdly, because it is almost intuitive that the antidote to the dismal and "mechanistic" sciences should be found in the "gay" science with its ability to unconceal and act upon a greater truth obfuscated by and closed off to the scientific rationalization of nature; and lastly; because the lives and works of the poets in question represent the flowering of three different strands of organicism culminating in their controversial political engagements.

Organicism run in parallel to the dominant intellectual current of the 17th century often put under the umbrella of the Enlightenment. Similarly, organicism was relegated to the periphery of intellectual life in the United States. By focusing exclusively on the American poets we can exhume their alternative thesis of what America could have been.

**Bio.** Mikheili Toria was born in Tbilisi, Georgia. He studied at the Robert Schuman European School in Tbilisi, obtained a Bachelor's Degree in English from the University Lumiere Lyon 2 and is currently writing a thesis for his M2 in the University of Strasbourg. His interests include history of ideas, speculative fiction and animation. ([mikheili.misha@etu.unistra.fr](mailto:mikheili.misha@etu.unistra.fr))

10.00-10.30 **Jakob Summerer** (University of Freiburg), “Communicating Eating Disorders: Metaphor, Embodied Simulation and Experiential Understanding in Autopathographies” (MA)

**Abstract.** Understanding the abstract in terms of the concrete is a primary function of metaphors in both speech and thought. This function is particularly prominent in autopathographies, in which writers face the challenge of narrating and communicating their highly subjective and complex illness experiences. As I will argue in this paper, eating disorder narratives – a rather under-researched sub-genre of the autopathography – show a striking density of phenomenological metaphors that express a sense of ‘what it is like’ to experience this mental illness. Tasked with granting the reader access to the atypical mind of the author’s experiencing self, this fascinating group of metaphors has the potential to trigger embodied simulations in the reader. As research on mirror neurons has suggested, embodied simulations are a crucial prerequisite for the development of empathetic responses to others’ pain, which is why these metaphors as simulation-facilitators play such a key role in the autopathographical communication of experience. They allow readers a more experiential – as opposed to a merely conceptual – understanding of the emotional pain, inner division and loss of conscious control that characterise many experiences of eating disorders. In my discussion of the potential functions and effects of the metaphors found in these texts, I draw on research conducted by neuroscientists and cognitive linguists on metaphor and text comprehension. Moreover, my detailed analysis of individual metaphors makes use of the versatile toolkits provided by Cognitive Metaphor Theory and Blending Theory.

**Bio.** Jakob Summerer is a MA student (English Literatures and Literary Theory) at the Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg in Germany. He specializes in narratology (the theory and study of narrative) and is currently researching different forms of autopathographical storytelling, as well as we-narration and the gendering of narrative voices. Additionally, he teaches introductory courses at the University College Freiburg and works as a freelance translator. ([Jakob.Summerer@gmx.de](mailto:Jakob.Summerer@gmx.de))

## Session 2 Music and voice

**Chair: Sami Ludwig**

9.00-9.30 **Dorsaf Sakraoui** (UHA Mulhouse), “*Paradise Lost* and the Fortunes of John Milton’s Hell in Pop Music” (MA)

**Abstract.** *Paradise Lost*, the epic written by the seventeenth-century poet John Milton, changed the view of paradise, hell, and heaven forever. The poet describes the Fall of Man, starting with the fall from grace of the rebellious angels. Milton’s legacy lived, is living, and will forever live, in contemporary works illustrating and breathing new life into his epic. One particular field that the poem inspired is music, where Milton is considered one of the most brilliant theological explorers of the darker subjects of sin, depravity, and man’s inclination toward evil.

This presentation focuses on the effect generated by Milton’s description of hell on pop music. I will try to answer the following question: how exactly does Milton’s hell influence contemporary pop music? Many bands playing different genres have used *Paradise Lost* as a source of inspiration to add its classical aesthetic to their own works. Because the number of such works is huge, only Heavy Metal and Rock will be discussed in this presentation. We will first give an overview of the infernal elements presented by Milton in *Paradise Lost*. Then, we will go through the effect of them on pop culture generally and, going more into detail, tackle their impact genre by genre. Starting with Heavy Metal, in this first part we will analyse Extreme, Symphonic, and Gothic Metal. In the second part, we will listen to the Rock genre analysing samples from Folk Rock, Experimental Rock, and Progressive Rock. The hybridity between old and new has always provided some aesthetic results, and the fortunes on Milton’s Hell in pop music is a good example of that.

**Bio.** Dorsaf Sakraoui obtained her first Master’s degree in British and American Studies (Master of Arts) at les Frères Mentoutri University in Constantine (Algeria). She is now an M2 student in English Research at the UHA, Mulhouse. Her research interests include popular culture, Danteology, infernal symbology, and intermediality. ([dorsaf.sarkaoui@uha.fr](mailto:dorsaf.sarkaoui@uha.fr))

9.30-10.00 **Fabrice Schultz** (University of Strasbourg), “The vocal physicality of language in Richard Crashaw’s sacred poetry (1612-1649)” (PhD)

**Abstract.**

Muse, now the servant of soft Loves no more,  
Hate is thy Theame, and *Herod*, whose unblest  
Hand (o what dares not jealous Greatnesse ?) tore  
A thousand sweet Babes from their Mothers Brest:  
The Bloomes of Martyrdome. O be a Dore  
Of language to my infant Lips, yee best  
Of Confessours : whose Throates answering his swords,  
Gave forth your Blood for breath, spoke soules for words.  
Richard Crashaw, « Sospetto d’Herode », v. 1-8

In the opening stanza of Crashaw’s translation of the first book of Marino’s epic poem about the Massacre of the Innocents, the reference to the speaker’s “infant lips” combined with the visually powerful and evocative image of a divinely-inspired language deeply rooted in the tormented bodies of the martyrs point to the physicality of language. Although two manuscript versions of “Sospetto d’Herode” currently held at the Bodleian Library prove that the poem was composed as early as 1637, this aspect of Crashaw’s poetics runs throughout his work and culminates in the posthumous *Carmen Deo nostro* published in 1652.

I will strive to demonstrate that the vocal physicality of language testifies to the poet’s indebtedness to Catholic mysticism and was progressively emphasised by the various editors of Crashaw’s poems to highlight his spiritual development and eventual conversion to Roman Catholicism. After briefly presenting the physiological origin of language and Crashaw’s emphasis on its physicality, I will analyse the influence of Catholic mysticism as the prevailing presence of interjections, exclamations, interlocutions, repetitions and syntactic excesses can be seen as a way of overcoming the limitations of language. I will finally explore the links between the various written versions of some poems and the physicality of language.

**Bio.** Fabrice Schultz is a fourth-year PhD in English literature at the University of Strasbourg and member of the SEARCH research group. His thesis investigates images of spheres in Richard Crashaw’s poetry (1612-1649), a subject that connects theology, philosophy, science, rhetoric, aesthetics and poetics. He also teaches English at ENSCMu, the National College of Chemical Engineering of Mulhouse. ([fabrice.schultz@etu.unistra.fr](mailto:fabrice.schultz@etu.unistra.fr))

10.00-10.30 **Lars Münzer** (University of Freiburg), “Are We All Living in Amerika? On Americanization, American Music Imperialism and the New Pop Formula in Germany” (MA)

**Abstract.** Against a history of American political and military interference abroad and the unmatched popularity of US popular culture the world over, the perceived dominance of US artists in German music culture continues to nurture prevailing fears of Americanization. An analysis of American and German popular music, however, reveals those fears as unfounded. The emphatically multicultural origins of American pop music in the American melting pot already complicate the idea of an inherently “American” music. In similar fashion, an analysis of the harmonic, structural and lyrical characteristics of past and present US hit songs

illustrates a pop formula that in its current form has a distinct Scandinavian design. In Germany, this blend of multicultural influences then meets a culture equally informed by British and domestic traditions, informing a modern music culture not Americanized so much as historically shaped both by trends of homogenization and hybridization. The modern industrialization of music creation via track-and-hook songwriting further promotes cross-cultural collaboration and music distribution on the global market today is equally dictated by supranational media conglomerates and technologies from all over the world rather than any strictly American influence. Instead, the political, cultural and economic prowess of the US allows its music industry to function as a trend-setter that ultimately promotes the very homogenization of popular music that continues to threaten local music cultures and musical diversity, and which is so often confused with processes of cultural assimilation rather than being perceived as a consequence of the extreme commodification of culture.

**Bio.** Lars Münzer received his M.A. in British and North American Cultural Studies from Freiburg University. In addition to disaster studies on societal collapse and climate change, he has also branched out into ethnomusicology and popular music analysis. ([larsmuenzer@gmail.com](mailto:larsmuenzer@gmail.com))

10.30-11.00 **Break**

11.00-12.00: **2 parallel sessions**

### **Session 3 Characters and objects**

**Chair: Noëlle Cuny**

11.00-11.30 **Capucine Blanc** (University of Strasbourg), “Appearance versus reality: Shakespeare’s *Coriolanus*, *The Winter’s Tale*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *Richard III* – Representations of womanhood during the Renaissance, from literature to Women’s History” (MA)

**Abstract.** In England, the status of women in the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries is discussed and the society is shaken by women’s religious, judicial revendications, protests in London streets, transvestites, and female authors whose texts defend women’s cause. Some of the sex-equality revendications could be named as “proto-feminist”. These claims are debated in the intellectual spheres of the Renaissance and the first *querelles de femmes* take place.

This research relies on four plays from different genres: a comedy (*The Merchant of Venice*, 1600), a tragedy (*Coriolanus*, 1623), a romance (*The Winter’s Tale*, 1623) and a historical play (*Richard III*). In these plays, most of the female characters are presented as being smarter, braver and more influential than the male ones; more often than not, they are ruling the actions and the conclusions of the plots. Shakespeare presents a patriarchal society in which women rebel, but usually end up going back to their initial places. This paper questions the representations of wayward behaviors and puts them in contrast with the pamphlets of the time. The mirror games seen in literature and the English society of this times are examined. Some of the actions and the ideas that are proposed by the female characters on stage can be considered as very “advanced” for an age when women were not even physically allowed on these same stages.

**Bio.** After spending a year in Pennsylvania teaching French, Capucine is now back to France to end her Master 2 in English while completing a French literature Master program at the same time at the Université de Strasbourg. ([capucineblanc@hotmail.fr](mailto:capucineblanc@hotmail.fr))

11.30-12.00 **Laura Ospina Godoy** (UHA Mulhouse), “Possessions in the Bildungsroman: Objects and Character Development in Virginia Woolf” (MA)

**Abstract.** The original concept of *Bildung* in literature involves the ability of a protagonist to achieve his or her own interpretation of ‘the self’ despite social or moral conflicts. Does this concept mean the same for the Modernist Bildungsroman? How do Modernists interpret ‘the self’? Virginia Woolf proposes her own notion of the self by bringing into the concept of *Bildung* the human and nonhuman world and by referring to the importance of the relation between these two worlds in the contribution of the being, the self, and life. Also Bill Brown and Jean Baudrillard agree that, even though objects have not been considered part of the subject, they are in fact an extension of it. To analyze this issue, we focus on Jacob Flanders,

the protagonist of Virginia Woolf's Bildungsroman *Jacob's Room*—a young man that has shown an affinity to possess objects throughout his life. As a young adult, he develops his impression of the world that surrounds him. Acquaintances, friends and family have an impression on him and his character as well. How are these objects that he owns implicated in Jacob's character development?

**Bio.** Laura Ospina Godoy obtained her bachelor's degree on education in English as a second language in Bogotá, Colombia. After two years of teaching, she focused her interest on English literature and civilization and decided to complete a Master's degree in English research at the university of Haute-Alsace. Her main research interests include the history of civilization, feminism and modernist literature. ([laura.ospina-godoy@uha.fr](mailto:laura.ospina-godoy@uha.fr))

#### Session 4 Alternative histories

**Chair: Philipp Schweighauser**

11.00-11.30 **Sofie Sabbioni** (University of Basel), "Fantasy, Fiction, Faction, and Fascism: A Comparative Literary and Discursive Analysis of the Contemporary U.S. American and Russian Radical Right's Narratives of Empire" (PhD)

**Abstract.** In Vitalij Orlov's dystopian – or utopian? – novel *Evrazija // Eurasia* (2018), a Russian pensioner wakes up in Moscow in 2046 after a long coma, only to find that the Russian Federation no longer exists, having been replaced by Eurasia, a great empire incorporating many of Russia's adjacent nations. Since Putin's presidency – with the annexation of the Crimea in 2014 and Russia's control over certain of the former Soviet territories – this neo-imperial fantasy has to some degree become reality, and Putin's populist and nationalist stance has encouraged the Russian ultraconservative right, spearheaded by neo-fascist thinker Aleksandr Dugin, to openly call for a new Russian empire. Across the Atlantic, another superpower has in the last years voiced and enacted its imperial visions. The long existing imperial policies of the U.S., always in interplay with nationalist undertakings, have been voiced more clearly under the Trump presidency, most (in)famously with the revisionist and palingenetic campaign slogan "Make America Great Again," and with the rise of a new radical right-wing movement, the alt-right, led by figures such as white supremacist Richard Spencer. Here, too, this development is mirrored in speculative fiction, e.g., in Harold Covington's *Freedom's Sons* (2013), which describes the civil war following the founding of a white Ethnostate on the territory of the former U.S. Interestingly, the Russian and US far right movements reference and penetrate each other to a certain degree. In this talk, I will outline these connections, while defining the concept of *alternative* – meaning regressive and palingenetic – *utopia* in order to discuss narratives of newly revived imperial greatness as expressed in radical right and neo-fascist Russian and U.S. American speculative fiction.

**Bio.** Sofie Sabbioni is a PhD student of comparative U.S. American and Russian literature at the University of Basel. Her research focuses on the interplay of faction and fiction in political and literary narratives of empire of the U.S. and Russian far right, and on the entanglement of the two movements. ([sofie.sabbioni@unibas.ch](mailto:sofie.sabbioni@unibas.ch))

11.30-12.00 **Marlène Rudolf** (UHA Mulhouse), “*Wolfenstein* and *Fallout*: Alternative History in Videogames” (MA)

**Abstract.** Alternate History is a genre of science fiction that reflects on society and how the world might look if some crucial events had occurred differently. The *Fallout* and *Wolfenstein* video game franchises produced by Bethesda Softworks give an insight into how America might have looked like if its arch enemies in World War II had won (*Wolfenstein*) or if a nuclear war had opposed the Republic of China and the United States (*Fallout*). They both share similarities, for example, the use of a retro-futuristic aesthetic and the exploration of how society and culture would have turned out to be in such a case. However, even though these games seem to look at the past, they also carry a contemporary point of view, as they were published at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup>. Using some specific examples, I will compare *Fallout* and *Wolfenstein* in order to analyze how Alternate History is used in the context of the fictional United States in these games, and what this implies in terms of the real present-day insecurities of American citizens. How do these games use Alternate History as an excuse to link their universes to the real-life history of their players, and do they carry a message for them about their own world? I will show, for example, how the Nazi technology is both a factor of their loss in the real World War II and of their victory in *Wolfenstein*, and also how the game uses that idea to show that Americans are afraid to be technologically surpassed by another nation, but also relied on the Nazis in order to improve their own technology. In *Fallout* there is a similar issue related to technology, which forced the United States into a murderous arms race with the Republic of China that ended in the nuclear destruction of both countries.

**Bio.** Marlène Rudolf has an English degree from the University of Mulhouse, and I wants to continue by doing a Master Recherche on American civilization and cultural studies. She is interested in literature and the influence that history has on fiction. The TER worked on last year also involved the *Fallout* games, comparing their visual aesthetic and influences with the American iconography of the Fifties. ([marlene.rudolf@uha.fr](mailto:marlene.rudolf@uha.fr))

12.00-13.30 **Lunch**

13.30-15.00: **2 parallel sessions**

### **Session 5 Wonder and knowledge**

**Chair: Monica Manolescu**

13.30-14.00 **Ella Imgrüth** (University of Basel), “Wonder in Adventure Novels: The Case of *Robinson Crusoe*” (MA)

**Abstract.** Adventure novels are about the extraordinary: set in unknown lands full of danger and excitement with protagonists that are capable of astonishing deeds and able to cope brilliantly with the life-or-death situations they need to overcome in order to return home. There is much to wonder about, both for the adventurer and the reader. Indeed, since antiquity ‘wonder’ is considered to be a primary response to the new, the extraordinary, to something beyond our knowledge. It is understood to be an affect which disrupts thought, captivates attention, and ignites imagination. However, despite the adventure novel’s reliance on the wondrous and the astonishing, wonder as an affect often counteracts the hero figure, the action-based structure of the plot, and the immersive and identificatory reader experience.

In this paper, I explore how this ambivalent relationship manifests in Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* (1719). Defoe’s novel provides a link between the adventure romances of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century and the modern adventure novels of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Examining both Crusoe’s wonder *in* and the reader’s wonder *about* the adventure, I will show how Crusoe’s development from young adventurer to seasoned hero is accompanied by precarious moments of wonder which expose and restructure the relationship between adventurer, environment, and reader.

**Bio.** Ella Imgrüth is an MA student in Literary Studies at the University of Basel with a focus on German and English literatures. Her research focuses on narratology, aesthetics, travel literature, and the relation between space, politics, and writing. ([ella.imgrueth@unibas.ch](mailto:ella.imgrueth@unibas.ch))

14.00-14.30 **Justine Michelotti** (University of Strasbourg), “‘The Fault in Our Science’: The acquisition of knowledge in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* and *The Jewel of Seven Stars*” (MA)

**Abstract.** In *Dracula*, Van Helsing, a famous vampire hunter voices concerns about scientific ambition: “Ah it is the fault in our science, that it wants to explain all; and if it explains not then it says there’s nothing to explain”. Upon reading this sentence, one might be puzzled about what he means, and more precisely what he means about the science of his age, that is the Nineteenth Century. It is quite acknowledged by critics of the period that materialist science struggled against the religious knowledge and tradition that has still a huge influence over society and sets of knowledge. But Stoker is careful not to draw such a clear-cut discrepancy. On the contrary, he portrays the acquisition of knowledge as a quest exploring both the realm of materialism and the realm of occultism, that is to say the practices and

phenomena which explore the world of the invisible. This ambivalent positioning is what I aim at analysing: what is Stoker's portrayal of the acquisition of knowledge? What does he say about his age's relationship to science and knowledge? Stoker was no scientist and yet he resorted to scientific elements and knowledge in his stories, themselves deeply infused in occult tradition and supernatural settings.

This paper will examine the aforementioned novel *Dracula* (1897) and another, *The Jewel of Seven Stars* (1903). If the stories they tell are different, there are nonetheless points of convergence between them which clearly deserve analysis. I propose an exploration of Stoker positioning between two apparently opposed concepts: materialism and occultism.

**Bio.** After a bachelor in English literature which she passed in Nice, Justine Michelotti completed an Erasmus exchange in Aberystwyth University in Wales. There she studied Nineteenth Century literature and more precisely the Fin-de-Siècle period about which she is currently working on for her Master's degree at the University of Strasbourg. ([justine.michelotti@etu.unistra.fr](mailto:justine.michelotti@etu.unistra.fr))

## Session 6 Reading and rereading

**Chair: Anne Bandry-Scubbi**

13.30-14.00 **Tristan Ramaut** (University of Strasbourg), "The Reader as Maze-Treader: Exploring Mark Z. Danielewski's *House of Leaves*" (MA)

**Abstract.** Mark Z. Danielewski's novel *House of Leaves* (2000) is a maze of a book. It combines an intricate narrative structure made up of multiple diegetic levels with an extraordinary inventive and proteiform approach to the laying out of text. How does one navigate such a labyrinthine novel, filled with echoes and *errores*? In other words, how does the maze-like quality of the text affect the reading experience? In this talk I will first introduce the novel and its narrative architecture, displaying a few examples of its formal and typographical idiosyncrasies so as to provide the audience with a gateway to the labyrinth. Using Penelope Reed Doob's notion of multicursal maze as well as Espen J. Aarseth's concept of ergodic literature and Genette's metalepsis, I will then discuss how, by conflating theme and form, the book becomes a literal labyrinth, dynamiting reader-passivity and engaging the reader—or maze-treader—in an experience akin to play.

**Bio.** After obtaining a bachelor in plastics engineering at the INSA of Strasbourg, Tristan Ramaut joined the English course of the University of Strasbourg in 2017. He went on an Erasmus exchange in Cambridge in 2018-2019. Last year he wrote a short dissertation about the notion of control in *Tristram Shandy*. ([tristan.ramaut@etu.unistra.fr](mailto:tristan.ramaut@etu.unistra.fr))

14.00-14.30 **Francesco E.A. Jannetta** (University of Basel), "Fit for Human Consumption: An Indigenous Reading of Bret Easton Ellis' *American Psycho*" (PhD)

**Abstract.** In his 2018 novel *Moon of the Crusted Snow*, Anishinaabe writer Waubgeshig Rice details the struggles of an indigenous community during a power outage in a harsh winter.

The situation is exasperated by the arrival of the white man Scott, whose cannibalistic survival strategy conjures the imagery of the Windigo, an Anishinaabe figure tied to the consumption of human flesh. Due to Scott's whiteness, the Windigo additionally represents the ongoing destruction of indigeneity through the hunger of white capitalist settler colonialism. This aspect of the Windigo in Rice's novel bears semblance to Patrick Bateman in Bret Easton Ellis' *American Psycho* (1991). Like Scott, Bateman commits abhorrent atrocities, taking advantage of the most vulnerable members of society for his own satisfaction. However, Bateman's murderous crimes are not linked to physical survival, but rather the sustenance of his consumerist existence. For Bateman, the destruction and consumption of human lives becomes the most exclusive status symbol. Bateman thus becomes a yuppie Windigo, who must still an insatiable hunger for the survival of his capitalist consumerist persona.

**Bio.** Francesco E.A. Jannetta is a PhD student at the University of Basel. His MA thesis analysed Bakhtinian dialogism between oral traditions and modern literary tropes in contemporary indigenous literatures. Apart from a strong focus on Native American and First Nations literatures, he is interested in postmodern forms of narration, postcolonial literatures, and the representations of toxic masculinity in modernist and postmodern literature. ([francesco.jannetta@unibas.ch](mailto:francesco.jannetta@unibas.ch))

14.30-15.00 **Nabiha Khemgani** (UHA Mulhouse), “Bad language testers stay home, save lives’: L2 Reading Comprehension Tests” (MA)

**Abstract.** Readers read all kinds of texts for different reasons. They may read fiction for pleasure, nonfiction for education, other texts for professional reasons, and even set texts in exams. Various things go on when readers read. For instance, readers may think about what they are reading, and they may try to relate it to things they have experienced to try to understand it better. This cognitive and neurological activity is internal, private, and personal. But language testers seeking to test reading comprehension face several problems. Testing a reader's level of comprehension of English (e.g., A2, B2, C2), for example, requires understanding something about the reading process, textual complexity, and test design. It is widely assumed that designing a reading comprehension test without understanding these aspects may produce unreliable results. But testing reading comprehension is a complicated field. In this presentation, I discuss the effect that standard reading comprehension test tasks have on secondary language (L2) reading performance, with specific attention paid to multiple-choice tests. Then I discuss how L2 reading tests may affect L2 learning in general.

**Bio.** Nabiha Khemgani is a Master 2 student in the Department of English at the University of Haute Alsace in Mulhouse. She is originally from Algeria, and she is now working on reading comprehension within the framework of Second Language Acquisition. Her Master thesis is about the effects that multiple-choice question test may have on measurements of L2 reading comprehension. ([nabiha.khemgani@uha.fr](mailto:nabiha.khemgani@uha.fr))

15.00 **Concluding remarks**