



# MEANING

Fig. 117

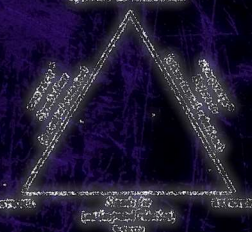
Das Netz!



## anglophonia

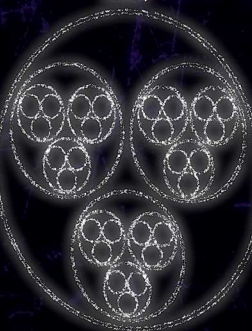
FRAGILITY OF  
MEANING

Fig. 118

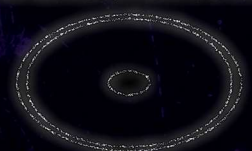


M	A	Y	2	7	T	H
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Fig. 119



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES  
AND  
SOCIAL SCIENCES  
| UNIVERSITY OF ZAGREB |



# BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

# **ANGLOPHONIA**

*International Student Conference in English Studies*

<https://anglophonia.ffzg.unizg.hr/>

## **ORGANIZER**

**English Student Club X.a.**

<https://xa.ffzg.unizg.hr/en/>

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## Foreword

(...) no one utters it: its source, its voice is not to be located; and yet  
it is perfectly read

### R. Barthes, “The Death of the Author”

We assume that meaning resides in our shared knowledge of the world, that it lives in our minds and hearts, easy to grasp and materialise. However, in the age we live in, the age of A.I., meaning is changing, its foundations are shaky, and Barthes’s author has sufficiently been drawn and quartered. Is poetry still poetry when its author has no soul? Does our communication mean anything when it has been automatised and outsourced to a machine? Meaning cannot stay still, it must flow, move and be used to create, but how far can we stretch meaning without being complicit in its destruction? Through a discussion on contemporary trends which are changing the way we view communication, interaction and art, we came up with the topic of this year’s student conference, *Fragility of Meaning*. Our aim is to explore the role of meaning and its form within all fields of English studies, with the goal of participation of diverse presenters – from translation students, linguists, literary scholars and beyond.

On behalf of the Organizing Committee

Mia Platužić

## KEYNOTE PRESENTERS

Ljubica Matek, PhD, Associate Prof.

Dept. of English

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Osijek

### **Fragile Ontology: Human Extinction in Byron's "Darkness"**

The talk will expound upon Lord George Gordon Byron's poem "Darkness" (1816) from an eco-ethical perspective considering the destructive relationship that humans have to its environment and each other despite the fact that, ultimately, humanity is contained within and by the natural world. The idea of human exceptionalism and individualism in Hobbesian sense is both detrimental and reductive to self as the self is constituted in relation to others, to its more-than-human environment. In the poem, fear and selfishness are represented as automatic, instinctual reactions to a major ecological crisis, which reveal the fragility of human authority and the limits of our power. Despite the poem's apocalyptic representation of the future, the talk will rely on the ideas of more-than-human care rooted in principles of interspecies reciprocity and of ethical responsibility toward the Other to suggest that dystopian visions should be read as a call for change of human self-perceptions and actions. Rigid anthropocentric principles seem detrimental and futile in a world where meanings are

constantly unfolding in our embodied, lived reality and where solidarity may complement our vulnerability and support humanity in building a better, more inclusive, and more sustainable world. Fragility and vulnerability, perhaps paradoxically, emerge as strengths that foster meaningful solidarity and support our relational entanglement.

**Keywords:** Byron, ecology, fragility, more-than-human, solidarity.

Dušan Stamenković

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### **When Meaning Breaks and Binds: A Multimodal Analysis of Family Repair and Cooperation in a Video Game**

Video games are emotionally charged environments in which fragile interpersonal relations are both represented and enacted through player interaction. In some of the relatively recent titles (e.g., *Hellblade: Senua's Sacrifice*, *Celeste*, *The Last of Us*, *Life Is Strange*, *Disco Elysium*, etc.) the emotional content seems quite prominent. Within video games, meaning is negotiated, disrupted, and repaired in real time. This talk explores how emotional tension, conflict, and repair unfold across semiotic resources in the cooperative video game *It Takes Two*. Focusing on the relationship between a divorcing couple forced into collaboration, the analysis examines how family relations are constructed and renegotiated through both dialogue and gameplay. While linguistic research has addressed friendship and romance, family bonds remain relatively underexplored, especially in digital contexts. The study is based on selected in-game dialogues and gameplay sequences, with particular attention to scenes relevant to the topic. It combines discourse-analytic tools such as turn-taking patterns, pronoun use, and evaluative language with multimodal perspectives that account for gesture, spatial positioning, gaze, and auditory elements. Early interactions are characterized by blame and confrontation, while later sequences show increasing alignment through praise, shared evaluations, and coordinated action. The findings indicate that emotional repair emerges through repeated cycles of communicative adjustment and successful cooperation, as mechanically enforced collaboration stimulates relational alignment. The game also functions as a metaphorical framework in which marriage is conceptualized as a journey and a process shaped by interruptions that require coordination and reflection. Overall,

the study argues that family is not a fixed structure but a fragile and ongoing achievement, continuously renegotiated through interaction.

Mark Metzler Sawin, PhD

Eastern Mennonite University

**The Stories We Tell Ourselves: Reflections on the Fragility of Meaning**

Like all animate creatures, we as humans perceive and react to the world around us. But for us, this is not enough. We need to know more. We ask who, what, when, where, why, and how? all to answer our true question—what does this mean? This presentation addresses this year’s conference theme, “The Fragility of Meaning,” by exploring the deeply human act of meaning making. It will explore examples from multiple media and disciplines to examine how we think about concepts such as creation, authenticity, and experience, and how we then tenuously turn those ideas into meaning.

## STUDENT PRESENTERS

Maja Ivaniš, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Osijek  
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### **Haunting and Ambiguity in “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” by Washington Irving**

Washington Irving's short story “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” is a compelling example of how the blend of folklore and the supernatural can create a sense of unease and uncertainty about the reality of one's surroundings. The encounter between Ichabod Crane and the Headless Horseman shows how the narrative destabilizes meaning by presenting events that can be interpreted as either supernatural occurrences or products of imagination. The persistence of the legend within the small village of Sleepy Hollow illustrates how folklore survives across time through continuous retellings, each slightly reshaping the story and revealing the fragility of meaning across social perspectives. The story is analyzed through Paul Ricoeur's narrative theory, which explains how meaning is articulated through the interpretation of events within a narrative structure. In this context, the plot enables the continual reinterpretation of the legend as the story evolves through retelling. The aim of this research is to analyze the story of “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” and demonstrate how legend, imagination, and interpretation contribute to making the narrative ambiguous and the meaning unstable.

**Keywords:** Washington Irving, The Legend of Sleepy Hollow, Paul Ricoeur, narrative theory, folklore, meaning

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### **“Normal People” as a Hypertext of “A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man”**

This paper analyses Sally Rooney's “Normal People” (2018) as a hypertext of James Joyce's “A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man” (1916), framing both as Bildungsromans (according to Buckley's model of the genre) that trace protagonists' development through late teenage and early adolescent years in Ireland. The point of this paper is not to prove that Rooney deliberately refers to Joyce but that this kind of analysis can yield interesting results. The overarching theme of identity search and social alienation of Joyce's protagonist Stephen Dedalus and Rooney's Connell Waldron are compared through several aspects that are, in my opinion, common to both novels; the aspect of social class, the role of a woman, hegemonic masculinity, nationalism and social critique. The thesis of the paper is that Rooney rewrites “A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man”, matching it in its Bildungsroman concerns, but relocates it to neoliberal, twenty-first century Ireland, which results in continuation but also inversion of Joyce's main aspects of protagonist's identity development. In other words, contemporary postmodern literature can be read as an intellectual and artistic continuation of the modernist tradition, addressing the same fundamental human concerns while adapting them to a new historical context.

**Keywords:** Bildungsroman, neoliberalism, hegemonic masculinity, class alienation, hypertextuality, identity development

Victoria Vestic, University of Split, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (vvestic1@ffst.hr)

### **Acataleptic Epistemology and Negative Capability in Eliot's Middlemarch: The Narrative as a Probabilistic Cloud**

As Birgitt Flohr writes, the Victorian period was the “golden age of certainty about the objectivity of observation.” However, opposing the “spirit of the age,” George Eliot’s *Middlemarch* “can be read as a systematic deconstruction of any naïve attitude towards observation. Interpretation is shown to penetrate every aspect of life” (Flohr). This observation aligns with the ancient concept of acatalepsy, the “inapprehensibility” (Allen) of absolute knowledge, which ethically calls for restraint in judgment and an uneasy tolerance of incertitude and incompleteness (epochê). Consequently, this paper argues that *Middlemarch* can be read as a probabilistic field, a kind of “cloud” of meaning in which certainty is never absolute but instead measured in degrees. Somewhat echoing epochê, John Keats’s concept of “negative capability” describes “being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact & reason,” and for Keats it is heroic, defining his “Man of Achievement” (Rejack and Theune). This paper argues that Eliot advocates for her characters an ethical stance similar to Keats’s, in which “goodness” does not necessarily “feel” good and more often calls for inaction rather than action. In this way, the “fragility of meaning” is not ethically debilitating but becomes an ethically viable substratum.

**Keywords:** epistemology, acatalepsy, probability, negative capability

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### **Gossip as a Narrative Technique in Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories by Sandra Cisneros**

In the short story cycle *Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories*, Sandra Cisneros depicts the numerous facets of the Chicana identity and the diverse experiences of Mexican American women living on the borderlands between Mexico and the USA. To illustrate this diversity, the stories employ a wide range of narrative techniques, including gossip as a form of informal, vernacular discourse. This paper explores the insufficiently explored function of gossip as a narrative technique in a selection of stories from the cycle: "The Marlboro Man," "My Tocaya," and "La Fabulosa: A Texas Operetta". Drawing from analyses of different textual characteristics of the short story cycle by Mary Pat Brady and Aleksandra Izgarjan, my paper argues that the engaging experience of reading these stories originates from the use of gossip as a narrative technique. By constructing the stories as private conversations about absent characters, Cisneros establishes a specific mechanism of transmitting information by positing the framed narratives as interpretations by unreliable narrators. In the act of gossiping, the narrators instill surplus meaning into the stories through commentary, while simultaneously providing additional information about themselves and their community through unintentional revelations loaded with meaning. The paper also reveals how gossiping provides underlying structure and establishes what Ned Schantz calls a female network within the cycle that includes and engages the reader, making the work experiential.

**Keywords:** Sandra Cisneros, gossip, narrative technique, Chicana literature

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### **Information Structure across Languages: Rheme Identification among Czech and Slovak English Learners and Native English Speakers**

This study explores how native and non-native English speakers identify rhematic elements in sentences, using Functional Sentence Perspective theory. While Czech and Slovak typically place the rheme sentence-finally, English relies on SVO order with more flexible information structure. Three surveys were conducted: two bilinguals (English/Czech) administered to 108 Czech and Slovak university students, and one monolingual (English) completed by 151 native English speakers. Participants read excerpts from Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire and selected the most informative sentence units. Responses were labeled “convergent” if they matched the FSP-predicted rheme, and “divergent” if not. Sentence-final rhemes were widely recognized, while non-final ones were more challenging, yielding 67% divergent responses. Surprisingly, participants' native-language background had minimal impact, suggesting similar rheme identification strategies across all groups.

**Keywords:** Czech and Slovak learners of English, Cross-linguistic comparison, Functional Sentence Perspective, Rheme, Information structure, L2 acquisition

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## **Ambiguity in Populism: “We vs. They” Polarization in Donald Trump and Zorhan Mamdani**

Fairclough considered discourse as language used to represent social groups. These can be considered as ambiguous or dependent on the social actor willing to outspoke on a group's behalf. By examining how ambiguity is decoded in political discourse, it becomes evident that it contributes to the construction, reinforcement, and exclusion of social groups within a shared sociopolitical space, rather than a marker of neutrality. In such, ambiguity is not only a linguistic feature, but a strategic tool that enables ideological positioning.

From this approach, this study analyzed how pronoun ambiguity is a marker of populist discourse. Therefore, this study approaches populism as a discursive practice grounded in identity construction but created from ambiguity. Drawing on Critical Discourse Analysis, as well as Chilton's Deictic Space Theory and Van Dijk's Ideological Square, it will be analyzed how contemporary American political discourse mobilizes ambiguity to construct antagonistic “us vs. them” dynamics.

The analysis focuses on speeches by Donald Trump and Zohran Mamdani during their different electoral stages, exploring how personal pronouns (we/us vs. they/them) function as ideological markers. While Trump's discourse reinforces polarizing narratives, Mamdani's rhetoric is examined as a potential counter-discourse created by the migrant narrative, this study was influenced by decolonial perspectives inspired by Frantz Fanon.

Ultimately, this paper argues that ambiguity plays a crucial role in the fragility of meaning, enabling populist discourse to reshape collective identities and legitimize ideological divisions.

**Keywords:** Language, US politics, Polarization, Social Actor, Pronoun Ambiguity, Counter-discourse

Spyros Macris, University of Cyprus (spyrosmacris@hotmail.com)

### **Localization in Automotive Marketing Campaigns**

This paper examines the cultural differences in the automotive industry advertising, across markets from different regions. The approach is first inspired and validated by Nissan's risky attempt to enter the Saudi Arabia's market in 2017 when they lifted its ban on female drivers, with a localized video attempted endeavour aiming at persuading its target audience. I then present an ad in the western world and proceeding by analyzing comparatively the semiotic differences in terms of visual elements, style, and use of language. This suggests how intentionality of message and meaning changes across cultures, depending on the cultural norms of the target context.

**Keywords:** localization, advertisements, comparison, cultural norms, semiotics

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### **Lolita on Social Media: Between Ethics and Esthetics**

This paper examines the reception of Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* (1955) on social media platforms, with a particular emphasis on Instagram and Pinterest. Notwithstanding the recognized ethical complexity of this novel among the literary scholarship and observant readers, it seems that the nickname Lolita circulates in the digital world without much attention paid to its origins and context, including Humbert Humbert's actions. Within the framework of digital and visual culture, together with John Fiske's theory of popular culture and views from media studies, this paper explores how the novel's title and associated visual motifs are (re)interpreted online.

Furthermore, the paper focuses on imagery linked to Nabokov's widely disputed novel, especially elements originating from Stanley Kubrick's film adaptation and Bert Stern's photograph. Based on a qualitative analysis of selected examples from Instagram and Pinterest, this research showcases that these motifs, together with Dolores Haze's nickname, are frequently separated from the narrative and ethical context of Nabokov's novel. Instead, they are mainly used as esthetic markers, encouraging and generating content that underlines visual appeal over critical engagement.

Finally, the paper argues that such representation of *Lolita* on social media platforms illustrates a wider problem, i.e., the tendency in contemporary visual culture to prioritize esthetic attractiveness while marginalizing ethical reflection, thus prompting questions about the cultural implications of literary reinterpretation on social media.

**Keywords:** *Lolita*, Vladimir Nabokov, social media, popular culture, ethics, esthetics

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### **Metaphors and Metonymies in TEFL - Meaning of Emotion through Colour**

Idealized cognitive models, which represent both the encyclopedic knowledge and the cultural concepts of a lexical item, explain how metonymy and metaphor function best. In the case of expressing emotions, metonymy ACTUAL for POTENTIAL plays an important role for understanding metonymy in ESL pedagogy. Instead of saying She might feel happy we use the example She is happy. Conceptual metaphors link colours to emotions by connecting physical processes with warmth: She had rosy cheeks, ROSY CHEEKS is HAPPY. For young foreign language learners, early detection of categorization of colours with emotions can help them develop connections that facilitate further acquisition of complex vocabulary items, such as idioms and phrasal verbs. In this paper, the author will examine the connections the pupils make with colours and emotions that have previously been taught in the book (happy, sad, grumpy, nervous, scared, brave, and kind). Pedagogical implications of this paper will be that ESL teachers need to help students learn the new vocabulary by teaching them different strategies for foreign language acquisition and by explaining the concepts behind the meanings of new vocabulary.

**Keywords:** Metaphor, Metonymy, Emotions, Colours, Learning strategies

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### **"Parodic Fandubbing of Anime: Analyzing Linguistic Variation and Creative Shifts in Fan-Created Dubbing Videos of Jujutsu Kaisen"**

This paper investigates the creative liberties encountered in a number of parodic fandubs produced for the anime series, "Jujutsu Kaisen" (2020). More specifically, it will analyze the ways in which these fan-made videos deviate from the original source and moreover, will attempt to shed light on possible reasons behind the mass production of parodic videos for this specific anime series during the years 2024 and 2025. The parodic fandubs that will be examined, all taken from different creators, have two common features: all are created for humoristic/entertainment purposes, and, each of these videos, has altered linguistically the original text either through the incorporation of regional linguistic variation (African American Vernacular, Latinx Vernacular) or through the inclusion of internet slang (Gen Z slang). The present paper will, inter alia, draw on pertinent theoretical insights on audiovisual translation (e.g. Pérez-González, 2014) and fandubbing (Rocio Baños, 2019/2020/2025). The comments and descriptions underneath the fandubbed videos on YouTube, will also be examined in the research, drawing attention to the audience's reactions and creators' intentions. I hope that this paper will help shed some light on certain contemporary practices of fandubbing and on the reasons why this specific anime has given rise to such a big number of radically derivative fan-created dubbing videos and what this can possibly mean for fandubbing as a practice in general.

**Keywords:** fandubbing, dubbing, fandom, modern slang, amateur translation

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### **Satire in Song: Power, Dialectics and Musical Humour in South Park**

Music serves not only as entertainment but as a social practice allowing groups to express critical views. The American satirical series *South Park* utilises both functions. While audiences enjoy the show's occasional musical numbers, these songs also function as powerful tools of satire. Characters, often singing from positions of power, attempt to persuade others to adopt a particular viewpoint (Boyd and Plamondon 2008). Satire relies on dialectical devices that generate contrast or contradiction within the song. Such devices involve aspects of lexis and grammar, producing a clash that leads the audience to recognise the discourse as insincere (Draitser 1994; Simpson 2003).

Drawing on Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough 1996; Wodak 2001; Van Dijk 2008), this presentation qualitatively examines how lexis, figurative language and grammatical patterns interact to construct humorous contrasts in selected songs. These contrasts satirise social control and manipulation, reflecting how language in contemporary US discourse asserts dominance over other social groups.

Preliminary results reveal four patterns: lexical inversion, where the lexis of a proposed solution matches the lexis of the problem it claims to solve; semantic reversal, attaching positive connotations to culturally negative concepts; hyperbolic lexis, using language of extreme trauma to describe mundane grievances; and directive contradiction, where the lexis of liberation is contradicted by clauses promoting social conformity. The paper discusses how these patterns function as satirical strategies subverting the language of social control (e.g. conformity, emotional manipulation, social exclusion).

**Keywords:** South Park, song, CDA, satire, power

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### **Scars of postmodernism: An understanding of the anti-hero in contemporary literature from Deadpool to Severus Snape**

This research intends to study the role of the anti-hero as a central figure in postmodern literature and seeks to understand why this type of character has become so relevant from a New Historicism and psychoanalytic approach. To understand their relevance in the present day, a definition must be established for this new archetype. The anti-hero is defined as a "morally grey" protagonist who behaves heroically on some occasions but does not fit the mold of the traditional hero as they are flawed by certain traits that can often be traced back to the Dark Triad (narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy). This raises the concern that the appearance and popularity of this new archetype means that society is becoming more desensitized to the perpetration of inhumanities we are often presented with. A hypothesis that can be confirmed if we take into account key postmodernist events like the Second World War.

This study examines and offers insights into how society's changes in values and beliefs have been a relevant factor in the birth of this new type of hero. It does this by exploring and analyzing characters such as Severus Snape from Harry Potter by J.K. Rowling and Deadpool from the Marvel franchise.

**Keywords:** Antihero, hero, postmodernism literature, Dark Triad

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**“A little too unreal”: Queering Ambiguous Spaces in Richard Bruce Nugent’s ‘Geisha Man’ and Claude McKay’s ‘Romance in Marseille’**

This presentation examines Richard Bruce Nugent’s unfinished manuscript of “Geisha Man” (c. 1929) and Claude McKay’s posthumously published novel “Romance in Marseille” (2020) in terms of the ambiguous spaces that host these narratives and the ways in which such spaces foster marginal identities and allow for queerness. The “Tout-va-Bien” bar in the Vieux Port of 1920s Marseille and the dark parks and ballroom parties in *Geisha Man* at the height of the Harlem Renaissance transform accordingly into sites of ambivalence, subversion and fluidity, and conversely produce divergent temporalities which foreground the emergence of all kinds of “deviance.” By drawing upon Michel Foucault’s concept of heterotopias as “other” spaces, capable of superimposing a variety of different images onto one physical site as a means of highlighting the fragility of “situated” concepts and thus illuminating their transgressive potential in sheltering socially fragile identities, the analysis will focus on the “queered”—in the sense of defying categorization—nature of the spaces which McKay’s and Nugent’s characters navigate in their respective texts. Upon entering these spaces, the illusion of ordinariness is quickly dismantled and their complex dynamics give rise to an alternative and unapologetically “queer” use of the space, wherein all binaries unequivocally collapse and multiple identities seem to flow into another, ultimately turning the –marginal– spaces in modernist writing into unclassifiable sites of resistance and radical alterity.

**Keywords:** heterotopias, cruising, Michel Foucault, dissidence, marginality

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### **Dickens's A Tale of Two Cities: Narrative Drift and Serial Temporality and Retrospective Authority**

This essay argues that publication format radically alters narratorial authority by analysing how the narrative voice in *A Tale of Two Cities* changes between its serialized and volume versions. The study presents the idea of narratorial drift, a slow but cumulative change in the narrator's epistemic position brought about by small textual changes and shifting reading circumstances, going beyond the prevailing critical focus on suspense and plot. The analysis shows how the serial version functions within a temporality of interruption, anticipation, and reader reorientation, characterized by incursions, modal uncertainty, and dialogic address, based on narratological frameworks created by Gérard Genette and Mieke Bal. The volume edition, on the other hand, suppresses these characteristics in favour of a retrospective, authoritative narrative voice that is distinguished by structural coherence, declarative certainty, and continuity. By paying particular attention to segmentation, duration, focalization, and micro-level stylistic modifications, the article demonstrates that reader temporality and the material constraints of publication co-produce narratorial identity, which is not fixed. The codex form reconstitutes this voice as cohesive and omniscient, but serialization creates a contingent, processual narrator susceptible to delay and disturbance. This study redefines narrative voice as a dynamic function rather than an intrinsic feature of the text by emphasizing the relationship between textual form and reading habit. In the end, it makes the case for a more comprehensive narratological method that takes media factors into account when analyzing narrative discourse.

**Keywords:** serialization, narratorial drift, narrative voice, temporality, Dickens, narratology

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**"Extraneous Evil:" Extra-Discursive Queerness in Bram Stoker's "Dracula" and R. L. Stevenson's "Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde"**

This essay looks at how Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and R. L. Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* deal with the construction of identity within a heteronormative context, as it is formulated and established by repeated linguistic acts. The monstrous protagonists of the two novels, *Dracula* and *Mr. Hyde*, are denied a narrative voice and are expelled from society as symbols of a transgressive sexuality that has to be eliminated. The paper specifically focuses on the titular antagonists' subsequent elusiveness of any description and their refusal to be contained in sign, which results to the disruption of linguistic and narrative norms. Through close reading grounded in post-structuralism and queer theory, this paper argues that this kind of disruption allows for the reconstruction of the linguistic barrier in order to make the queer identity intelligible. The two narratives exhibit the constant construction and reconfiguration of identity through repeated linguistic acts, as well as the fragility of that repetition; as such, they reexamine the figure of the monster as the sexuality that is not compatible with the norm. More than the queer subject, however, the monsters signify the possibility of expanding the representational realm of language to include the queer identity through a disloyal repetition of the norm, thus triggering further conversation on the discursive nature of identity in gothic novels.

**Keywords:** identity, gothic, intelligibility, abjection, interpellation, reconstruction

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### **Intersemiotic Translation and the Fragility of Meaning: From Romeo and Juliet to Gnomeo and Juliet**

This paper examines the intersemiotic translation of Romeo and Juliet into the animated film Gnomeo and Juliet. More specifically, the tragedy of Romeo and Juliet is reimagined into a comedy, retelling the tale through different lenses. Using a comparative semiotic analysis informed by adaptation theory, the analysis of both source text and target text explores what gets lost in this shift and what happens to intentionality and message in a contemporary byproduct produced at a distance of approximately 400 years. With some elements retained while others are changed, the canonical text of Romeo and Juliet is adapted into the animated film Gnomeo and Juliet. This adaptation illustrates the fragility of meaning when a Shakespearean text is reinterpreted across genres, mediums, time, and audiences.

**Keywords:** Intersemiotic translation, adaptation, Romeo and Juliet, Gnomeo and Juliet, meaning, intentionality

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### **Four are the stories: An Intertextual Analysis of Beowulf through the lens of Jorge Luis Borges' Los Cuatro Ciclos.**

The aim of this paper is to perform an intertextual analysis of Beowulf by showcasing the presence of the archetypes described by Borges' Los Cuatro Ciclos in the story, and thus proving their presence at the very inception of English culture as we know it.

Beowulf is among the oldest works of literature in English history, being dated somewhere between the ninth and tenth century, but possibly originating as far back as the fourth (Bjork & Niles, 1998, p. 13). Despite it having been forgotten for centuries, it now stands as one of the most important texts in English literature and history, having been compared to the Odyssey and the Aeneid (Klaeber, 2008, p. cxxiii).

Los Cuatro Ciclos is a short essay written by Jorge Luis Borges, an Argentinian poet, writer and essayist in his book *El Oro de los Tigres*. Borges argues that any story ever told can be seen as a variation of one of four narratives: The Siege, The Return, The Search and The Sacrifice.

Beowulf is a uniquely appropriate work for this analysis due to one simple fact: of Borges' four cycles, it contains them all. Beowulf is a tale about a castle besieged, saved by valiant heroes; it is a story of a searching quest to slay the demoness that threatened the peace; it is the story of a hero's victorious return home across the sea and it is the story of an old king, sacrificing his life to bring salvation to his people. This essay will thus serve as a detailed analysis of Beowulf's connection to these ancient archetypes, and as proof of their deeply rooted presence in the work.

**Keywords:** Beowulf, Intertextuality, Archetypes

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## **Narrative Agency and the Transmission of Family Memory in Octavia Butler's *Kindred* 1979**

This paper explores the role of the narrative agency in Octavia Butler's *Kindred* (1979), arguing that the protagonist Dana should reconstruct her family history and identity through a long process of critical engagement in the past of her ancestors. Drawing on Hanna Meretoja's concept of 'narrative agency', which considers narratives as "cultural practices of sense-making that provide interpretations of being in the world", and argues that "narratives are crucial to how we understand our possibilities in the world" (Meretoja, Kinnunen, & Kosonen 390–391). The study examines how Dana juggles the narrative environments of her family's history to confront, interpret, and reconstruct her own narrative. Initially, Dana possesses limited knowledge about her family's history; later, in her time travels, she discovers that several traumatic events have occurred to her family, including her grandmother, Alice's, suicide. In this case, family memories were not transmitted through stories but instead through silence. Reflecting the ways in which family memory encodes shame and unspoken trauma. Dana's unexpected time travel to the past advocates for critical awareness of historical oppression. Engaging with Christin Sharpe's notion of Living in the Wake of slavery, in which "the Black child inherits the non/status, the non/being of the mother" and experiences the ongoing embodiment of historical terror (Sharpe 14–15). Using these theoretical frameworks, along with a close textual analysis, this paper examines Dana's active exercise of agency in constructing her family narrative. Also, how storytelling functions as a method to recover, understand, and connect with broader familial, cultural, and historical frameworks.

**Keywords:** Family memory Narrative agency, Historical oppression

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### **Literary ballet producing meaning: MacMillan's *Romeo and Juliet***

Although *Romeo and Juliet* was written more than four hundred years ago, this story has been adopted by a wide range of cultures across the world through various artistic mediums. Shakespeare's play offers one of the most impressive examples of how classic literature may be revalued and integrate contemporary culture thanks to transmedial adaptations. Among the many recognized forms of rewriting, Kenneth MacMillan's ballet production, *Romeo and Juliet* (1966), is generally overlooked as a legitimate adaptation of Shakespeare. This stems from the general assumption that dance, as a non-verbal kinaesthetic medium, lacks the tools to communicate the power of Shakespeare's language. Yet ballet should not be reduced to a solely aesthetic and meaningless artform since its interactions with literature occurs on various levels: not only does ballet deliver and reproduce meaning inherited by the literary source, the specificities of this artform adds layers of meaning and renews the audience's understanding of the literary work.

By considering Shakespeare's play and MacMillan's ballet side by side through a close reading framed by intermediality and adaptation theory, this paper demonstrates the intermedial potential of literary ballet and argues for its revaluation as a meaningful artform. Shakespeare's inherently kinaesthetic language invites a transparent translation into ballet while MacMillan's strategies highlights these balletic qualities and heightens the emotional charge of Shakespeare's dramaturgy. Thus, the traditional literary components of Shakespeare, such as narrative and language, may be undertaken by ballet's own discursive potential.

**Keywords:** Shakespeare, literary ballet, intermediality, adaptation, discursive bodies

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### **Thresholds of Terror: Liminality and the Hero's Journey in Gaiman's Lovecraftian Narratives**

This paper examines how Neil Gaiman reanimates Lovecraftian cosmic horror through the intertwined frameworks of mythopoeia, liminality, and the hero's journey.ocusing on *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* (2013) and the short story "Only the End of the World Again" (1994), it argues that Gaiman transforms Lovecraftian dread—rooted in inhuman vastness and existential insignificance—into a site of metamorphosis, where the encounter with the

monstrous becomes a threshold toward self-knowledge and renewal. Drawing on Joseph Campbell's monomyth model and Victor Turner's theories of liminality, the study traces how Gaiman's protagonists cross ontological borders between the mundane and the numinous, negotiating the tension between mythic archetype and modern subjectivity.

Through close readings of Gaiman's use of narrative voice, spatial symbolism, and intertextual allusion to Lovecraft's mythos, the paper identifies what might be called a "mythopoeic weird": a mode in which terror and transcendence coexist. Gaiman's heroes, unlike Lovecraft's doomed narrators, return from the abyss with fragments of meaning—suggesting a postmodern recuperation of the heroic pattern within the framework of cosmic indifference. This synthesis

not only humanises the Lovecraftian universe but also situates Gaiman within the broader late-20th- and 21st-century revival of the weird tale, where horror, myth, and modern psychology converge. Ultimately, Gaiman's Lovecraftian narratives demonstrate that the threshold between terror and transformation remains a fertile site for re-enchanting the modern imagination.

**Keywords:** Neil Gaiman, H. P. Lovecraft, cosmic horror, liminality, mythopoeia, hero's journey, weird fiction, transformation

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### **“Hoof Homed to Hoof”: Reclaiming the Beast and Asserting Animality as Poetic Provenance in Ocean Vuong’s “Queen Under The Hill”**

In his ample animal metaphors, Ocean Vuong finds echoes of his own identity and experience. His writing manifests itself as if in surrealist bas-relief; it prioritizes the physical actuality of the body, yet always transcends boundaries of form and eludes fixed meanings. In my presentation, I will perform a limitrophic reading of Vuong’s “Queen Under The Hill” from *\_Night Sky with Exit Wounds\_* (2016), exploring the ever-shifting interstitial space between animal and human in the poem. I will draw from Julia Kristeva’s “Approaching Abjection” (1982) and Jacques Derrida’s “The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)” (2002) to argue that the poem functions synchronously on a symbolic and a literal axis. On a symbolic one, “Queen Under The Hill” may be understood as *Ars Poetica* that transmutes a dying mare into an embodiment of the speaker’s pain-stricken Vietnamese heritage, a disparaged motherland and a suppressed history to which he is called instinctively to return in order to write. The mare of the poem, “the beast”, as it is called, is in fact not “alagon”, that is, bereft of reason, but rather posited as a site of refuge and poetic origin. Meaning is thus born of the abject. Beyond metaphor, in identifying with the mare and positioning himself as her progeny, the poetic subject weaves a treatise on the parallel fates suffered by animals and racialized others which subverts hegemonic notions of logocentrism. The text refutes the humanist view of animality as the crude prehistoric condition that one must abandon on the path to enlightened artistic production. Instead, it embraces the non-human other, reclaims its precarious abjection, and locates animality at the beating core of the poetic endeavor.

**Keywords:** animality, posthumanism, abjection, limitrophy, contemporary poetry, liminality

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**"You are on a path in the woods": Player Agency and the Quest for Meaning in Black Tabby Games's *Slay the Princess – The Pristine Cut***

The aim of this paper is to analyse player agency and how the player's choices shape the ever-shifting narrative labyrinth of Black Tabby Games's subversive visual novel *Slay the Princess – The Pristine Cut*. Through the myriad of branching paths that the player is presented with, *Slay the Princess*'s narrative is kaleidoscopically reactive as it does not hold back while responding to the player's actions. The paper will examine the ways in which *Slay the Princess* challenges the structure of the visual novel by analysing the subversive nature of its storytelling premise and the ways in which its recursive, looping narrative explores the game's central themes of change and stasis, the nature of love and mortality alongside the search for identity and meaning.

**Keywords:** fragmentation, reunion, mortality, love, branching narrative, player agency

