

**The 1st Annual Doctoral Research Conference of MODA, the Modern English and
American Literature and Culture Doctoral Program of ELTE
4th of June 2021, from 9 am to 4 pm - MSTeams**

PROGRAM

I. 9.00 – 11.00. chair: Dóra Csikós, senior lecturer, ELTE, DES

- 1.) 9.00.-9.15.: Csaba József Spalovszky The impact of Emanuel Swedenborg's thinking and *The Last Judgment* on William Blake's theology and *The [First] Book of Urizen: key concepts in a comparative study***

Abstract: The influence of Swedenborg on Blake's thinking is not a new discovery among Blake scholars. Some thoughts and teachings of Swedenborg are immediately identifiable, while others appear more indirectly in Blake's writings. Several of Swedenborg's key concepts and his unorthodox prophetic vision have undoubtedly left their mark on Blake's theological views and his entire ideological system. There are works by Blake that experts have already analyzed from different perspectives, yet in light of Swedenborg's teachings, we can make new discoveries about them. I intend to demonstrate this mainly through the unusual pairing of Blake's *The [First] Book of Urizen* and Swedenborg's *The Last Judgment*. Since traditionally these two works have not been juxtaposed, I want to explain the reasons for the possibility of their comparison, as well as outline an internal synergy system in the theology of the two authors that will play a key role in my comparative study.

- 2.) 9.15.- 9.30.: Györgyi Kovács: The Supernatural in Ann Radcliffe's *Salisbury Plains* (1826)**

Abstract: In my paper, I am going to examine the representation of the supernatural in the poem *Salisbury Plains* (1826) from Ann Radcliffe's posthumous collection. The posthumous works have received much less critical attention than the novels published in Radcliffe's lifetime, and in the few papers discussing them scholars have emphasized their difference from the body of Radcliffe's works. As opposed to this view, I am going to argue that in many ways Radcliffe still relied on her earlier ideas and methods in the creation of these two works, especially with regard to the nature of the supernatural presented. However, as I am also going to show, in these later works the focus of the portrayal of the supernatural shifts from suggestions to more explicit forms of the supernatural, which was Radcliffe's response to the criticism she received.

- 3.) 9.30.- 9.45: Petra Johanna Hack: Education and female ideals in eighteenth and nineteenth century novels by women writers**

Abstract: The age of Enlightenment brought new theories on education, that led to the creation of not only conduct books for women, but also deeply influenced novels. We can see the impact of educational paradigms revealed in such novels, as Frances Burney's *Evelina, or a Young Lady's Entrance into the World*. Burney's work also influenced Jane Austen, whose novel, *Mansfield*

Park also presents a heroine whose education becomes central to her character-development, as it is contrasted with contemporary educational standards, that Austen is critical of. In the Victorian period, the focus of women's writing in domestic fiction remained fixed on women's education, and their impact on women's development. Elizabeth Gaskell's *Wives and Daughters* is representative of Victorian ideals for women's ideal roles within society, and Gaskell's own ideas on the ideal female education. In my presentation, I will briefly highlight the connection between all these novels, and also raise the question, why these novels all show an orphaned or semi-orphan heroine's education and development to present an ideal.

4.) 9.45.- 10.00: Sali Said: Individualism and Collectivism in Shakespeare: Conflict and Negotiation between Opposing Forces

Abstract: Peter Holbrook asserts that "Shakespeare is an author for a liberal, individualistic culture". In contrast, Kai Wiegandt emphasises the dramatist's matchless power to depict the mass community. This paper examines Shakespeare's approach to both individualism and collectivism to discern how his characters negotiate the conflict between these two imperatives and whether they achieve balance between them. Such characters may be in works depicting either an internal conflict, as in *Hamlet*, or an external clash between two groups, as in *Antony and Cleopatra*. Unlike critical readings treating the relationship between Antony and Cleopatra as a fixed construct, I identify three stages they pass through, from extreme individualism to collectivism, ending with a compromise between them. In addition, I highlight Cleopatra's combination of individualistic and communal attributes by focusing on her relationship with her lover, servants, and country. Mainstream scholarship discusses only parental expectations of Hamlet like revenge, ignoring his own expectations of other characters. This paper demonstrates that Hamlet's anguish stems mostly from being disappointed in his mother and lover who fail to meet his social and emotional needs. This explains the internal conflict he experiences over choosing between restoring the family honour (a collectivistic act) and committing suicide (an individualistic act).

10.00.-- 10.45.: Discussion, Q & A

Coffee break

II. 11.00.- 12.30. chair: Ákos Farkas, associate professor, ELTE, DES

1.) 11.00.-- 11.15.: Brigitta Gyimesi: Performativity and Illusion: The Problem of Fictionality in 20th-Century British and American Literature

Abstract In my dissertation I am planning to explore the porous borderline between fiction and reality as well as the ontological uncertainties inherent in texts. For this purpose I will rely on mostly English-language literature from the 20th century, with greater emphasis on the works of Vladimir Nabokov, Thomas Pynchon and Paul Auster. The “performativity” in the title refers to the literary application of speech-act theory (i.e. the creation of alternative realities by means of language), whereas by “illusion” I mean that fictional texts, employing certain narrative, textual and stylistic techniques, often pretend to be nonfictional, thereby obscuring the boundary between reality and imagination. At the present conference, I intend to introduce a subchapter dealing with the problematic relationship between the ontological affiliations of Nabokov’s autobiography, *Speak, Memory*, and his last novel, *Look at the Harlequins!*

2.) 11.15.-11.30.: Afaf Hamada: The Representation of Arab Women by Arab Female Writers of the 20th and 21st centuries

Abstract: My study will cover the following aspects in postcolonial and feminist theory: the autonomy of Arab women, the feminist Arab figure, the marginalized female voice, traditional gender roles, society’s expectations and appreciation of powerful women, intersectionality, patriarchy, colonization, postcolonialism, decolonization, and neocolonialism. The main aim of this research is to explore how Arab females are represented by Arab female authors. It investigates whether Arab women are exploited, silenced, or empowered in the selected late 20th and early 21st century literary works. It will inspect these angles through the thorough analysis of the works of the following authors: Ahlam Mosteghanemi, Nawal El Saadawi, Liala Al Atrash, and Alia Mamdouh. I will develop a chapter to each. I will investigate how liberated female characters are, whether they are physically, economically, and socially independent, how they are perceived and represented by the authors in the context of the postcolonial life in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, and Iraq respectively. Finally, I will place special emphasis on the question of language: how the language of the colonizer and the colonized interact in the selected works.

3.) 11.30.-11.45.: Judit Banhazi: Madmen in and out of time – madness in fiction in a McTaggartian reading

Abstract: The goal of my article is to familiarize readers with a philosophical essay and then use it as a basis of literary analysis. I apply early-20th century metaphysician J.M.E. McTaggart's arguments on the unreality of time onto the temporal experience of madmen in 19th-20th century British and American prose pieces. I do so with the intention to decipher the thoughts of these characters by authors Bernard Malamud, Virginia Woolf, Edgar Allan Poe and Charlotte Perkins Gilman in a way that we can actually find logic, truth-value, or a channel of communication with

them. My intention is not to prove that they did not suffer from psychological illnesses: I would like to challenge the idea that not being able to exist in linear, everyday time is something we should just regard as a sign of madness. By familiarizing the reader with McTaggart's idea that time is unreal, and approximating it to current quantum-physical ideas of Stephen Hawking, I try to outline how much of McTaggart's ideas are aligning with what we know of the nature of time scientifically as of now. Then, I show how the characters I chose to investigate think about time or live in time, and why theirs are actually relevant experiences that we could learn from and understand.

11.45.-12.30: Discussion, Q & A

LUNCH BREAK

III. 13.30.: 15.00: chair: Dániel Panka, assistant professor, ELTE, DES

1.) 13.30.-13.45.: Sergen Tastekin: Striving for Deanthropocentrised Relations: Rethinking the Human and the Posthuman in the Era of Biotech

Abstract: This study seeks to examine Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005) and Paolo Bacigalupi's *The Windup Girl* (2009), two dystopian science fiction texts that provoke the reader to put a critical spotlight on the centuries-old question of what it means to be human through the former's portrayal of the bare-life condition of self-policing human clones and the latter's portrayal of the bare-life condition of transgenic beings, namely cyborgs. That is to say, it is aimed to discuss that their parallel focal points regarding the bare-life condition of the posthuman, designated and maintained by the biopolitical systems and agendas of the naturally born human, call attention to the urgent need for the reconfigurations of the human and human nature as well as the posthuman in the age of biotech. In addition, one of the core objectives of conducting a comparative investigation of Ishiguro's and Bacigalupi's works is to reveal that the former shows a hopeless world order in which naturally born humans not only possess transhumanist fantasies that have excessively dehumanising effects, but also display a hypocritically conservative attitude towards the biotech revolution and the posthuman condition, while the latter's ambiguous ending paves the way for the hope for an all-encompassing, deanthropocentrised, and tech-progressivist future world order to be maintained and conveyed.

2.) 13.45. 14.00.: Réka Székely: Kathleen Jamie's selkies in the light of ecocriticism

Abstract: Part-human, part-seal, they are the selkies - or the 'selchs' in Scots language and folklore. Among the many recurrent images Kathleen Jamie uses in her poetry, the selkies are definitely outstanding in showing what probably the most concise definition of an ecocritical stance: interconnectedness means. This paper focuses on an ecocritical reading of a selection of

Kathleen Jamie's poems and essays, based on different interpretations of the term 'ecocritical'. The study investigates how the same figure, the figure of the selkie can have distinct perceptions depending on whether observed from a first, a second or a third-wave ecocritical position, concluding that third-wave ecocritics, especially Timothy Morton and his theory of the mesh, open up new directions and encourage interdisciplinary conversations both in the ecological reading of literature and in the literary reading of the environment.

3.) 14.00.-14.15.: Dániel Horváth: he Ambivalent Reception of Punk Rock and New Wave in Socialist Hungary, 1977–1982

Abstract Although the term 'punk rock' had originally been invented in early-1970's American rock criticism to retrospectively categorize a variant of rock'n'roll from the previous decade, it gained worldwide notoriety with the emergence of the New York and London punk rock scenes in the second half of the 1970's. For the most part, the music of these centres and the youth culture that surrounded them were sweepingly characterised in the Hungarian mass media of the age as manipulative and reactionary products of Western junk culture. At the same time, punk rock's anarchic aesthetic and do-it-yourself ethos informed a burgeoning new wave scene in early-1980's Budapest. This paper is an attempt to map out the conflicting visions of punk and new wave from these overlapping styles' first sporadic print appearances in Hungary to their adaptation by the participants of Budapest's underground rock'n'roll scene in the period between 1977 and 1982.

14.15.- 15.00: Discussion, Q & A

Coffee break

15.15.-16.00: Discussion with Dániel Panka: The Ups and Downs of the PhD Journey

Everything you always wanted to know about the PhD process, but were afraid to ask.