

ABSTRACTS & BIOS

Amina Benchikh, University of Haute-Alsace“From Memphis Noir to Hollywood: Metropolitan Violence in William Faulkner’s *Sanctuary*”*Abstract:*

Modernist writers like William Faulkner were not only familiar with literary innovations and experimental narrative forms but also with Hollywood and its cinematic staged platform. In this context, Faulkner’s documentation of Memphis in his novel *Sanctuary* can be seen as a direct representation of American modernists being influenced by visual narrative modes. His career in Hollywood—which started after the scandalous success attributed to *Sanctuary*—shaped his other novels like *Pylon*, which is often seen as an attempt to oppose modernity and its presence in America and Hollywood industries.

Drawing on Dziga Vertov’s definition of “Kino-Eye” and his opposition to classical Hollywood cinema, as well as Slavoi Žižek’s definition of “subjective violence,” this paper focuses on William Faulkner’s use of violence in his novel *Sanctuary* and his adoption of a new experimental writing style associated with a *film noir* thematic focus. It will examine the Southern city of Memphis as the major modernized agent that controls the characters’ mental functions, leading them, willingly or unwillingly, to act in an intrinsically violent manner. I will also discuss whether Faulkner’s stylistic as well as thematic alterations are only a way of depicting metropolitan mental and physical compartments in order to catch Hollywood’s attention—or whether they are in direct opposition to Hollywood’s staged cinematography. Faulkner’s use of kino-eye and “unstaged techniques,” first initiated by Dziga Vertov and other Russian filmmakers like Eisenstein, will help us examine Faulkner’s response to classical Hollywood cinema, and *film noir* in particular. Certain aspects of metropolitan violence will be presented as a means to study the writer’s sudden change in his writing style and to entertain the possibility of his novel as an objection to Hollywood and its unrealistic film scripts.

Bio:

Amina Benchikh is a graduate student of English at the University of Haute-Alsace in Mulhouse. She holds a BA and an MA degree in English from Ali Lounici University in Algeria. Her current MA thesis focuses on the concept of immediacy and visual representations of the metropolis in William Faulkner’s *Pylon* and John Dos Passos’s *Manhattan Transfer*. She has participated in the international conference *Being Out of Place: Deconstructing Travel Narratives in Postcolonial Arab Literature* with a paper focusing on exoticism as a travelling concept in Paul Bowles’ and Tahar Benjelloun’s translations of Mohamed Choukri’s *El Khubz al Hafi*. Her research interests include modernist and contemporary US literature, postcolonial and ethnic literature in connection with cultural and media studies.

Zineb Ben Imam, University of Haute-Alsace

“Gendered Discussions among American Revolutionaries: Mercy Otis Warren and John Adams”

Abstract:

“History is not the province of the ladies”—this is a condemning conclusion America’s second president, John Adams, expressed in his letter of April 17th, 1813 to Elbridge Gerry, America’s fifth vice-president. At a first glance, Adams’ statement may seem general and inclusive of womankind, but it targeted a particular woman with whom he had shared deep patriotic sentiments in the years of the American Revolutionary War: Mercy Otis Warren, sister of James Otis and wife of General James Warren—both distinguished patriots from Massachusetts. Though little known to a wider public, Mercy Warren was an exceptional woman of her time. She was a poet, playwright and historian. Warren also corresponded with many prominent figures of her time, and in particular exchanged hundreds of letters with John Adams. The content of their epistolary exchange was mainly political. The tone, however, changed greatly after the publication of Warren’s three-volume *History of the Rise, Progress, and Termination of the American Revolution* in 1805.

In my talk, I aim to show how the difference of their gender roles and political affiliations influenced their respective understandings of republicanism, particularly after the presentation of the Constitution in 1787 and the emergence of the anti-federalist debate. I will also analyze how these events impacted their long friendship and public image after the publication of Warren’s *History*. In order to give a closer and more personal view of their gendered divergence, my presentation will focus on selected passages from sixteen letters exchanged between Warren and Adams in the summer of 1807. I will look at the content and tone expressed by both sides, and at how they defend their respective positions. In order to contextualize this exchange, I shall also refer to letters written

by Abigail Adams and Elbridge Gerry, and discuss how the President's wife and Warren's friend reacted to these intellectual disagreements.

Bio:

Zineb Ben Imam obtained a teaching diploma in 2016 at the *Ecole Normale Supérieure* of Algiers, and then taught English in high school until 2018. She is currently a second-year doctoral student at the UHA Mulhouse, where she completed her MA in English Studies in 2020. Her main research interests are American women's history, particularly women's intellectual networking in the Early American Republic. Her doctoral project is tentatively entitled "The Political Philosophy of Mercy Otis Warren Through Her Epistolary Exchanges in 18th-Century Revolutionary America" (co-supervision Profs. Samuel Ludwig and Laurent Currely). She teaches English to STAPS students at the FST of the UHA. Zineb now lives with two adorable dogs, a Shiba Inu and a Labrador, after having been cynophobic for many years. She likes to cook Mexican food, bake pastries, and debate with her fiancé.

Yana Bosak, University of Freiburg

"Sexual Harassment and Polarization in the USA: Representational Strategies in Popular Film and TV"

Abstract:

The #MeToo Movement has influenced not only social and legal approaches to sexual harassment in the USA, but also its representations in cinema and on TV. In the aftermath of a variety of events, the film *The Bombshell* and the series *The Morning Show* were released. The narrative of both focuses on cases of sexual harassment at the workplace; however, the respective context is different. The film presents the conservative TV network Fox News, while the series shows the liberal and fictional media UBA. Political polarization in the USA creates a fracture in public opinions and legal approaches to sexual harassment. Therefore, analysis of their contrasting representations in popular culture is also fruitful. In this research, I will critically approach the representational strategies of sexual harassment. I am interested in cinematographic and narrative techniques, which shape the image of this phenomenon: what is included and excluded, what is emphasized, which elements are controversial? Moreover, I intend to analyze the gendering of the conservative and liberal media environments and how this process influences the extent of sexual discrimination and the public reaction to it.

Bio:

Yana Bosak is a Master's student at the Albert Ludwigs University of Freiburg. She started the program in British and North American Cultural Studies as a DAAD scholarship holder in 2020. Her research interests include the intersection of national, gender, and ethnic features in identity formation. She is also working with the space/place construction and its connection with stereotyping, agency, and colonial legacy.

Dane Coult, University of Strasbourg

"Ceci n'est pas le territoire: Transcending the Literary Frame in Wallace's *Infinite Jest*"

Abstract:

David Foster Wallace's seminal novel *Infinite Jest* (1996) has long been the subject of academic study for its critique of contemporary entertainment, its vivid portrayal of addiction, and its post-ironic ethos, which heralded the beginnings of a new literary era. Where postmodernism concerned itself with the "referential murkiness of verbal systems" (*Infinite Jest*), the 'map-territory' relationship between language and reality, and the artificiality of literary form, Wallace sought to reaffirm literature's capacity for communicating with readers and for investigating the nature of the contemporary human condition. Wallace and *Infinite Jest*, however, do not outright reject postmodern literary forms or philosophical conclusions. Indeed, the novel employs metafictional devices and highlights the problematic nature of linguistic mediation via the characters' struggle to communicate.

However, mainstream critical approaches (Kelly 2010, Konstantinou 2012) to Wallace and his so-called metafictional techniques are somewhat problematic in that the notion of metafiction refers, by definition, to self-reflexive forms rather than other-directed communication. Alternatively, these metafictional devices might be reclassified as a transcendence of the literary frame with the objective of engaging readers as active participants in a literary 'conversation'. Drawing on critical discussions of frames (Frow 1982, Stoichita 2015, Wolf 2006), this paper attempts to identify parallels between the visual and literary arts in order to revise mainstream approaches to Wallace's use of metafiction in the post-postmodern era.

Bio:

Originally from Los Angeles, California, Dane Coult received his Bachelor's degree in Anglophone Studies from the University of Strasbourg in 2020. He is currently a second year Master's student specializing in contemporary American literature while working as an English language teaching assistant.

Áine Dougherty, University of Haute-Alsace

“M.F.K. Fisher and the Centering of Female Pleasure: The Taboo of Sex in Women's Contemporary Autobiographical Cookbooks”

Abstract:

“‘She likes it, she likes good food,’ he said, wonderingly, to Al. ‘She cannot be a real woman!’” This quote from food writer M.F.K. Fisher's 1937 book *Serve It Forth* serves as a reminder of the constraints and gender norms dictating women's lives in the early 20th century. Fisher, who is said to be one of the pioneers of the “food essay” genre, turned many of those feminine stereotypes on their head in her highly personal and subversive works, both in form and function. Ostensibly about food, her books were really about much more.

In general, cookbooks are seen as a genre that disseminates and solidifies those gender norms, furthering the notion of home cooking as “women's work” and consistently evoking the “women as caregiver” frame, ideas that have been examined in detail by authors such as Jessamyn Neuhaus. However, by examining Fisher's body of work compiled in *The Art of Eating* (1990), I will argue that in her use of personal narrative and her unabashed reflections on the taboo of female pleasure, she used culinary writing as a place to transgress the codes of traditional cookbooks and dominant social norms. Firstly, I will compare the structure of Fisher's recipe books to *Joy of Cooking*, a more normative cookbook published around the same time, in order to show how Fisher transgressed the conventional recipe writing form. Secondly, I will show in three parts how Fisher centered female sexual liberation at a time when women were actively discouraged from doing so, especially in cookbooks. These three parts will feature the scenes she chooses to include in her works, her use of sexual language to describe food, and finally, her unconventional home life.

Bio:

Originally from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Áine Dougherty is a Master's student and an English *lectrice* at the Université de Haute-Alsace. Throughout her undergraduate studies in journalism and French at Northwestern University in Chicago (BSJ 2019), she cultivated her interest in food writing and the impact of food on society—and vice versa. During her time as an intern for the food television show *Très très bon* in Paris, she wrote a thesis in French entitled “En trois plats: L'influence du journalisme digital et des réseaux sociaux sur le journalisme gastronomique en France” (2017). After completing a year as a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant in Mulhouse (2019-20), she began her MA in English at UHA. Her current research topic deals with cookbooks as an unexpected space for American women to tell their subversive life stories.

Ece Ergin, University of Freiburg

“Weaving the Web in the Underworld: Defying Silence in Margaret Atwood's *The Penelopiad*”

Abstract:

Speech acts as a catalyst for overcoming trauma, it becomes an integral part of processing the traumatic event an individual experienced. It not only offers the survivor a chance to heal but also provides them with the opportunity to have control over their past experiences and narrate their version of the events. Putting the traumatic event into words enables survivors to acknowledge the traumatizing force, create a cohesive depiction of it, and as such, integrate it into the consciousness. However, narrating stories of healing from the afterlife presents a challenge since the setting itself does not allow speech to be enacted. The dead narrators of these stories lack an audience that can hear their voices while the living audience lacks the narration. Hence, a juxtaposition of speech and silence in the act of utterance presents itself in narrations from the perspective of the dead. This research focuses on Margaret Atwood's novella *The Penelopiad* (2005) to explain how silence in these stories is defied, and the healing processes are enacted. It expands upon the cultural reasons behind the silence of Penelope and the maids while elaborating on how the afterlife setting both enables and disables speech.

Bio:

Ece Ergin is a recent graduate from the University of Freiburg with a Master's degree in British and North American Cultural Studies. During her Master's education, she worked as both a Teaching Assistant and a Research Assistant. After completing her Bachelor's degree in American Culture and Literature at the University of Istanbul, she also worked as an ESL teacher. Her Master's thesis focuses on *Trauma and Afterlife Narratives in*

Contemporary North American Fiction. Her areas of interest include Trauma Studies, Postcolonial Studies, Gothic Literature, and Feminist Criticism.

Emilie Fritsch, University of Strasbourg

“Of Insects and Men: An Ecocritical Reading of Blake’s Lower Animals”

Abstract:

Blake’s symbolic animals have received much attention from ecocritical studies, although their interest has mostly been focused on his wild beasts, in particular his iconic tiger. Blake’s lower animals have not been the subject of as much discussion in the field, but their mere presence in his work has been praised as an attempt to give equal consideration to all living beings, regardless of their perceived aesthetic value. His belief in the holiness of all life forms as well as in the idea that they are all interconnected and that one cannot function properly without the others transpires in his inclusion of insects, but also in the way they tend to be presented. Insects are omnipresent throughout Blake’s work, varied in species, and occupy a central place in several of his poems. Most importantly, he tends to favour those that are negatively connoted, or whose valuation is ambiguous, rather than those that already benefit from more sympathetic representations in Western culture. He sometimes attempts to redeem them as symbols, or simply shows appreciation for them by including them in narratives in which they are not denigrated. However, Blake’s use of animals often lacks consistency, and does not fully sever him from the prevailing anthropocentric mindset of his age. Insects are no exception. Thus, the question of how insects are represented in Blake’s poetry, and with what purpose, is one that is worth looking into. This presentation will focus on a few of Blake’s insects, discussing how they are used to explore various aspects of the human-animal relationship, such as the hierarchy that has been established between living beings, or the prejudices that we may hold against certain species.

Bio:

Emilie Fritsch is a second-year Master’s student in English at the University of Strasbourg. She is specialising in British literature, a field of study that she became interested in after discovering the work of William Blake, on whom she is currently writing her thesis.

Nuria Galiana Sanatamaria, University of Haute-Alsace

“The Unwritten Rules of Spanglish in Popular Songs”

Abstract:

Nearly two thirds of the population of the United States speak Spanish in their daily lives, and some of them combine the local English with their native (or not) Spanish, resulting in what is called code-switching. This phenomenon between the two specific languages is often referred to as “Spanglish.” Although it often carries a negative connotation, some people consider this mixture a sort of dialect used to express an individual’s cultural “in-betweenness” (Casielles-Suárez).

Studies on code-switching have primarily focused on literature or spontaneous speech. However, the use of code-switching in music has gained a lot of popularity over time due to, in part, the increase of bilingualism and multilingualism at a worldwide level, but also because of globalization and the development of new ways of communication such as social media, which allows us to be closer to other people from all over the globe. Researchers like Penialosa, Pfaff, or Poplack have found that, even though Spanglish is usually not considered an actual language, there are some unwritten rules that the speakers of this mixture do apply when talking or writing.

I have studied the use of Spanglish in forty-five songs mixing Spanish and English that were published between 1990 and 2020 in Spain, the United States, and multiple South-American Spanish-speaking countries. The main objective of my study is to see if these unwritten rules of Spanglish are respected or not and compare the use and structure of this code-switching in casual communication and in popular songs. In order to answer these questions, I will analyze borrowings and calques, morphological adaptations and literal translations, if the switching takes place in a sentence (intrasentential code-switching) or between sentences (intersentential code-switching), as well as the resulting syntactical structure of the sentences. This research will provide insights on the use of Spanglish and the use of code-switching in English.

Bio:

Born and raised in Spain, Nuria Galiana moved to Alsace, France in 2016. She got her BA in English Studies at the Université de Haute-Alsace in 2020 and is currently in her second year of her MA, planning on doing a PhD next year. Nuria focuses on linguistics and is particularly interested in multilingualism due to her personal

experience of being in contact with multiple languages. She is currently working on her MA thesis on English-Spanish code-switching in popular songs released between 1990 and 2020.

Özde Nesil Gezici, University of Freiburg

“The Sleep Problem: Understanding Sleep from a Neoliberal Perspective”

Abstract:

Despite being a right, a need, a daily action, and a vulnerable condition since the beginning of human history, sleep as a research topic was largely neglected until the early twentieth century. Moreover, the predominant discourse around sleep was that it is a deathlike, passive, unproductive and governable state. Sleep has since been proven to be an active state that is integral for survival, yet the conversation about it is either kept on a personal level or veers towards its management and optimization. As sleep related disorders affect more people than hunger and homelessness, and as sleep poses an inherent resistance to the demands of neoliberalism today, it emerges as everything but personal, and hence a problem to be explored within cultural studies. In my presentation, I will be discussing the take-off of sleep research in the 1950s and its role in cementing “normal” sleep as it is commonly understood today, as well as its basis in the preceding sleep discourse. My goal is to show that most of the negative attitudes towards sleep as rest, leisure and unproductive time can be traced further than modern capitalism, and yet maintain a strong connection with contemporary neoliberalism, mostly to the detriment of the sleeper.

Bio:

Özde Nesil Gezici has recently submitted her thesis titled “Sleep in the Digital Age: Connecting with the Other” and is about to finish her MA degree in British and North American Cultural Studies at the University of Freiburg.

Julian Andreas Gonzales Bayona, University of Haute-Alsace

“Effects of L1 Spanish on L2 English Writing: A Case Study”

Abstract:

According to the 2021 edition of the EF English Proficiency Index, which studies the results of two million test takers worldwide, Colombia is 17th out of 20 Latin American countries, and 81st out of 112 nations studied in total. In a span of 10 years, Colombia has progressively dropped from 41st in 2011 (the first edition of the Index) to 81st in 2021. This reflects the decay of English proficiency in the country and highlights the importance that research in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) has nowadays in Colombia, and elsewhere.

In this presentation, I offer a brief overview of relevant and recent research on Cross-Linguistic Influence (CLI) from Spanish L1 to English L2, before focusing on CLI’s effect at the syntactical level. I will examine the way sentence structures in Spanish may affect the acquisition of English syntax in Colombian EFL students by discussing extracts from texts written by Colombian learners of English. Secondly, I will suggest potential consequences for the EFL classroom, including the possible benefit of having an English teacher with Spanish L1 instead of one with English L1 whose use of Spanish is limited.

Bio:

Julian Gonzalez has a degree in English Philology from the Universidad Nacional de Colombia and is currently an M2 English Research student at the UHA-Mulhouse. He is conducting research on cross-linguistic interference under the supervision of Professor Craig Hamilton. The observation of periodical errors made by several of his students throughout his 6-years-long experience as an EFL teacher inspired him to center his thesis on the negative effect that Spanish L1 may have on the acquisition of English L2 in Colombian adult learners.

Gayane Grigoryan, University of Freiburg

“Preservation of Ethnic Identity by Armenian Immigrants to the USA at the Beginning of the 20th Century in the Writings of William Saroyan”

Abstract:

My research concentrates on ethnicity, identity, and ethnic identity and is approached through the lens of cultural studies. It focuses on the hybrid ethnic identities of the first generation of Armenian Americans whose families had to flee from the persecutions in the Ottoman Empire in 1915. Being one of the representatives of the Armenian diaspora and having grown up as a person with a hybrid Armenian-Russian identity, I have been addressing the question of self-belonging throughout my life. The fictional works of William Saroyan introduce a number of characters who experience similar feelings of non-belonging and uprootedness. At the same time, Saroyan

describes the process of the preservation of their ethnic identities that helps Armenian Americans to save their “Armenianness” in the context of the American culture of the 20th century. Second-generation immigrants tended to follow the ethnic ideology of their ancestors, but they also experienced the influence of American culture. However, although research is based on the descent-consent theory introduced by Werner Sollors, it is rather difficult to classify ethnic markers into specific groups as ethnic identity is a constantly changing cultural construct. The research aims at distinguishing practical tools for the preservation of ethnicity, providing a deeper understanding of immigrant cultures and how they choose their ethnic affiliations.

Bio:

Gayane Grigoryan received a Master of Arts in Cultural Studies at the Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg. Being a DAAD scholarship holder, she entered Freiburg University in 2016 and concentrated on the ethnic identity of Armenian immigrants and their children in the USA.

Jennifer Howard, University of Freiburg

“Higher Ground in a Divided Nation: Civil Religion in America”

Abstract:

There is a religious quality about American identity—a sense in which American-ness itself can be thought of as a religion—that sociologist Robert Bellah defined in 1967 as “American Civil Religion” (ACR). Visible are the rituals around the revered role of the US President and presidential speeches; practices such as holidays, parades, memorials, and placing one’s hand over the heart during the national anthem; veneration of documents such as the US Constitution, spaces held sacred such as the US Capitol; the iconography of symbols such as the Statue of Liberty and the American flag. Invisible are the ideas and ideological commitments that give these venerations their cohesive common sense that have bound Americans together in a shared sense of belonging; at least until now. Building on Bellah’s original concept and the extensive recent research of Phillip Gorski that conceives of ACR as a sort of narrative identity, this talk will present early PhD research on the potential of American Civil Religion as a tool of depolarization.

Bio:

Jennifer Howard is a PhD candidate in North American Studies at the University of Freiburg. After leaving a career in finance in the US, she earned her Master’s degree in British and North American Cultural studies at the University of Freiburg in 2021. Research and interests include cultural memory, intellectual history, and post-capitalism.

Shannon Hughes, University of Basel

“‘I’m not your Patty Anymore’: Patti Smith’s ‘Hey Joe’ and the Art of Revolutionary Reworking”

Abstract:

“Hey Joe”, a folk-rock standard with mysterious origins, got its most intriguing reworking to date with Patti Smith’s debut EP in 1974. By musically and poetically deconstructing the male-dominated tale of domestic violence and centring it around the prominent figure Patty Hearst, an heiress that was first kidnapped by the Symbionese Liberation Army and then later joined the radical left-wing organisation, Smith managed to revolutionize the music sphere. Never before had the tone and subject of the song been re-imagined so dramatically. With the prominent piano addition, the music runs clear to reveal the depth of Smith’s lyrics and vocals, before soaring off into the frenzy the song is usually performed as. In her reworking of the standard, Patti Smith not only chose to challenge misconceptions around women’s (sexual) agency and violent behaviour, but her passionate delivery and unique spoken word performance also add to the lyricism of the song, rendering it more striking than ever before. In Smith’s version, “Hey Joe” emerges as a feminist literary statement, which just also happens to be a proto-punk song.

Bio:

Shannon Hughes received her Bachelor of Arts in English and History from the University of Basel in the summer of 2021. She continued to work as a student assistant on Daniela Landert’s SNF project “The Pragmatics of Improvised Drama Comedy”, which is an ongoing linguistic study on the language of Improv theatre. Currently, Shannon is doing an internship in radio journalism at Channel K Radio in Aarau, Switzerland. She is fascinated by the intersection of performance, music, and language as well as alternative art movements.

Isabel Jimenez, University of Basel

“Postcolonial Feminism: From the Holes to a Room of One’s Own”

Abstract:

White hegemonic feminism proposes the idea of a unified front on the basis of female gender while excluding intersecting factors like race, class, and sexuality, which alienates non-conforming women. The history of this view excludes the important contributions of Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and other subaltern feminists that have furthered feminist theory and praxis with an intersectional approach to patriarchal relations. Postcolonial feminism questions the traditional ideal of the ‘Universal Woman’ and the exoticification of the ‘Third-World Woman’ in academia as rhetorical objects that fail to provide a comprehensive view on the female condition. This paper focuses on the theoretical contributions by Dahlia de la Cerda (2020) and Ochy Curiel (2007), postcolonial feminists from Latin America who denounce the outdated rhetoric still in use in academia and mainstream feminism. De la Cerda directly challenges Virginia Woolf’s ideal of ‘the room of one’s own’ as elitist and proposes ‘matrix of oppression’ as a term that acknowledges the different levels of otherness. Curiel remarks on the erasure of postcolonial feminist issues that homogenization produces.

De la Cerda’s and Curiel’s works in postcolonial feminist theory along with Rajeswari Sunder Rajan and You-Me Park’s (2000) remarks on postcolonial literary studies show a need for restructuring academic curricula regarding the literature of the global south. Firstly, by decolonizing the canon and including non-traditional forms of expression like online activism, feminist protests, and anonymous testimonials including various backgrounds. Then, the teaching of those materials without othering is imperative. To do so the voice in such narratives must be amplified while learning the context that produced them, showing that they do not happen in a vacuum and that they are responding to collective issues of race, class, gender, sexuality, and more.

Bio:

Born in the United States, raised in Mexico, Isabel Jimenez is a UC Berkeley alumna with a Bachelor of Arts with a major in English Literature and a minor in Comparative Literature in Spanish. Her Honors BA thesis studied the parallels between British Victorian literature and post-independence Mexican literature under a postcolonial feminist approach concerning the dynamics between female characters and how they are perceived. Isabel currently lives in Switzerland and is pursuing her MA in Literary Studies within the fields of English and Hispanic Literature at the University of Basel. Always aware of her multicultural identity from her upbringing at the border between Mexico and the United States, in addition to her love of literature and traveling, Isabel is interested in the dynamics of postcoloniality and intersectionality in literature and in the world.

Emeline Jouault, University of Haute-Alsace

“A Season as the Celebration of Life and Death: Winter in a Selection of Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman Poems”

Abstract:

Poets Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman wrote many of their well-known poems about life and death. In exploring issues of mortality, they often expose the intricate relationship between what is alive, for instance by observing nature in all its details, but also what is no longer alive, questioning the issues of afterlife or life as a cyclic and perpetual loop. In so doing, both poets explore these notions of life and death, often by referring to the natural environment, seasons, and how precious Mother Nature is.

This presentation will show that winter, in particular, is the leading season in both the writings of Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman. To this end, it will compare Emily Dickinson’s “In Winter in my Room” and “Like Brooms of Steel” to Walt Whitman’s “Soon Shall the Winter’s Foil Be Here” and “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d.” Analyzing these poems together, this study will first connect winter’s connotations with death, in particular with elements present in the poems that connect the darkest period of the year with the end of all things. But this study will also show how each of these authors, in their own way, pass through winter, the season of death, and turn it into a significant beginning of something newer and better.

Bio:

Emeline Jouault obtained her BA in English Studies at the University of Upper Alsace and is now completing her MA degree at the same university. In her TER, she focused on Emily Dickinson’s poetry, analyzing the musicality of her poems and how the literary devices reach her readers. For her MA thesis, she is focusing on an eco-poetic reading of Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman in terms of the cyclical aspects of nature standing for the fragile relationship between life and death. In her private life, as a pastry lover, she adores to bake in her free time. She also appreciates art and often writes poems, sings and plays musical instruments.

Corin Kraft, University of Basel

“Southern Wetlands in Delia Owens’s *Where the Crawdads Sing*”

Abstract:

Delia Owens’s debut novel *Where the Crawdads Sing* (2018) invites an ecocritical perspective on Southern wetlands by exploring the marsh of North Carolina and stressing its relevance and importance for the entire ecosystem of the South. The marsh is presented as a literal and metaphorical liminal space that allows a different view on the role of humans within this precious ecosystem between land and water, and, thus, offers an enabling distance to critique the way humans treat Southern wetlands by explaining the negative consequences of drainage and land development in North Carolina.

As an ecosystem located between water and land, the marsh occupies a literal liminal place between the two elements water and earth. Metaphorically, the marsh in *Where the Crawdads Sing* is depicted as a space in-between that allows for the encounter between humans and non-humans, between different social classes, and between different ethnicities. Moreover, literature itself—which plays an important role in terms of the protection of the environment in the novel—becomes a liminal space that connects the fictional readers *in* the novel with the real-world readers *of* the novel. Finally, this liminal encounter invites the readers of the novel to rethink the real-world effects of drainage and land development of Southern wetlands from the mid-twentieth century to the present.

Bio:

Corin Kraft studied German Philology and English Literature and Language with a special focus on US Southern literature and American Modernism at the University of Basel and Cardiff (Wales, UK). Currently, Corin is a PhD candidate in Anglophone Literature and Culture at the University of Basel. The working title of her dissertation, which engages with the representation of time and space in contemporary literature of Mississippi, is “Memory, Place, and the Postsouthern in Contemporary US Southern Literature.”

Pierre Le Duff, University of Strasbourg

“‘Ev’ry Gamester winneth by the sport’: George Wither’s Emblem Lottery (1635)”

Abstract:

“I believe, this Recreation, will be as harmelesse as any, if it be used according to my intentions”, George Wither, a notoriously controversial poet of the seventeenth century, wrote in the introductory text to his *Collection of Emblemes* in 1635. He was referring to the lottery game he included in his book, which contains two hundred emblems, or allegorical picture-text combinations that were widely popular throughout early modern Europe. Wither goes to great length to claim that his lottery is merely an innocent pastime that was added to the work to make it less “over-solid and serious”, but a careful examination of the game in relation to the rest of the volume reveals a far more complex rhetorical and aesthetic purpose.

Through his game, Wither establishes a close, personal, often tongue-in-cheek and multi-faceted relationship with his readers, addressing them directly and creating the impression that the broad and general advice provided in the emblems is in fact tailored to their very personal needs. It is a highly original vector for social criticism and satire, and mirrors the author’s own religious and philosophical ambiguities with respect to notions such as free will, personal responsibility, and fortune. It grants the emblems a theatrical, dynamic, and social dimension that testifies to Wither’s profound understanding of the rhetorical possibilities granted to him both by the emblematic genre and by the nature of a game.

Bio:

Pierre Le Duff is a teaching assistant who is currently working at the English Department of the University of Strasbourg, where he teaches literature, literary history, and translation. He is currently completing his PhD thesis titled “Poetry, Persona, and ‘Self-Fashioning’: George Wither’s *A Collection of Emblemes* (1635) and Early Stuart England” under the joint supervision of Professors Jean-Jacques Chardin and Monica Chesnoiu-Matei.

Franca Leitner, University of Freiburg

“Tana French’s Dublin Murder Squad Series as State of the Nation Literature: Failed Families, Haunted Houses, Wild Woods”

Abstract:

This paper argues that the crime novel series known as Dublin Murder Squad series (2007-2020) by the Irish-American writer Tana French can be read as State of the Nation literature. The six novels portray the Republic of

Ireland in a time of profound societal change, namely the last years of the economic boom, the Celtic Tiger, and the economic recession in the aftermath of the financial crisis in 2008. In contrast to most crime novels, French's novels often refute resolution and leave their readers in a state of limbo, echoing a feeling of profound uncertainty, which was prevalent in Ireland at the time. Through the detectives on the Murder Squad, acting as "sociological tourguides", the novels are not only able to generate insights into a range of different social milieus but also articulate a clear cultural critique, aimed particularly at Celtic Tiger materialism and a ruthless neoliberal ideology. This critique focuses mainly on the institution of the nuclear family, the attitude towards the (often traumatic) Irish past, and the state of the Irish natural world. Overall, the novels paint the bleak picture of a country in which notions of the family home as a 'safe place' are deconstructed, the past is collectively disregarded, and the natural world increasingly destroyed. The country presented in Tana French's Dublin Murder Squad series is thus literally and figuratively a country in ruins.

Bio:

Franca Leitner has just finished her Master of Arts degree in British and North American Cultural Studies at Freiburg University. She holds a BSc in Psychology from the University of Düsseldorf and a BA in English and American Studies and History from the University of Freiburg. She will be starting her PhD in Irish Studies at the University of Würzburg in April, focusing on the representation of precarity and homelessness in post-Celtic Tiger literature.

Thomas Manson, University of Basel

"Reddlemen and Ragpickers: On the Outmoded Vagrants of Rural Modernity"

Abstract:

Modernist discourses have often overlooked outwardly static rural spaces in favour of the bustling metropolitan city. Ernst Bloch engages this issue in his 1935 work *Heritage of Our Times*, which criticizes the left's surrendering of rural communities to the fascist mythos of "Blood and Soil". Building on this provocation, I attach Bloch's concept of 'nonsynchronism' to Walter Benjamin's surrealist-inspired theory of the 'outmoded' in order to discuss the revolutionary potential in the (pre-)capitalist detritus of the English countryside; in the ancient rituals no longer observed and the factories no longer used. In doing so, the rural can be refigured as a dialectical space of resistance, whereby outmoded objects are recuperable in combatting forms of capitalist encroachment such as industrialization and heritagization. Thomas Hardy's 1878 novel *The Return of the Native* provides my main point of reference here, notably the disruptive, uncanny figure of the Reddleman: an "obsolete" sheep-dye tradesman who wanders Egdon Heath coated in the vermilion pigment of his trade. Far from presenting a nostalgic vision of a bygone era, Hardy's staging of surrealistic encounters between the outmoded and the modern forms part of a previously unrecognized tradition of rural modernity which destabilizes the metropolitan colonization of modernist imaginations, and mobilizes the countryside at the intersection of capitalism and rural traditions.

Bio:

Thomas Manson is a Research Assistant at the University of Basel. He is currently working on his PhD, *Remapping the Outmoded in Rural England, 1870-1995*. He is also Co-Artistic Director of Riddlestick Theatre, a folk theatre company based in Bristol, UK.

Julia Martin, University of Strasbourg

"The Informational Value of Existential Predications in Agatha Christie's Mystery Novel *And Then There Were None*"

Abstract:

In her novel *And Then There Were None*, Agatha Christie elaborated a compelling puzzle to captivate her readers: Ten people with blurry pasts find themselves trapped on a deserted island, where they are killed, one by one, with no clue as to who is responsible... But if the narrative itself is suspenseful, linguistic devices might also contribute to its engaging nature. Syntactic order in particular could play an important role in increasing tension, since it can affect the way information is distributed and, consequently, destabilize our perception of fictional processes. In fact, the recurrency of specific morphosyntactic constructions in the most suspenseful scenes of the novel appears to strengthen this correlation.

In this presentation, however, we will mainly focus on the structures containing existential processes, that is, the ones used to indicate the presence—or the absence—of diverse entities. These constructions, such as existential-*there* structures and locative inversions for instance, share a similar existential function. Yet, each of them relies on their own syntactic, prosodic, and informational discrepancies to generate different cognitive effects.

Therefore, our aim will be to determine how their syntactic and informational structures could alter our conceptualization of newly introduced entities, and even lead to an enhancement of narrative tension.

Bio:

Julia Martin is a Master's student in Anglophone studies who specializes in linguistics. She completed her Bachelor's degree in English at the University of Strasbourg after spending part of her third year in Chicago. (Supervisor: Stéphane Kostantzer)

Juliette Muré, University of Haute-Alsace

“Framing Middle-earth: Bilbo's ‘Perfectly Round Door’”

Abstract:

In our everyday life, a door is a common piece of furniture that enables a person to move from one room to another or ban outsiders from entering a building. A door is the separation between two rooms, i.e., a barrier between the outside and the inside of a structure. Depending on where a person stands, the object can be an obstacle, a protection, or symbolically, a new opportunity.

In J.R.R. Tolkien's novel *The Hobbit*, published in 1937, Bilbo Baggins, a hobbit, lives in Bag-End, a hobbit hole. Its front door is described as “a perfectly round door like a porthole, painted green, with a shiny yellow brass knob in the exact middle”. The particularity of this door is not its colour, but its rounded shape, which is quite rare in our world—but not in Tolkien's Middle-earth. Indeed, it is one of the particularities of the Shire, which is inhabited by hobbits. In this presentation, I will examine the symbolic and narrative meanings and functions of this door, an object which has not been studied in depth so far.

My talk will focus on how the front door of Bilbo's hobbit hole frames Middle-earth for the readers and the viewers of *The Hobbit*. I will also compare and contrast the illustrations created by J.R.R. Tolkien for *The Hobbit* to the artworks by Alan Lee and John Howe for Peter Jackson's film adaptations of the novel. Do the artworks convey the same meanings? Do Howe's and Lee's representations of Bilbo's front door have the same symbolic functions as Tolkien's representations?

Bio:

Juliette Muré graduated with a *licence* in English from the Université de Haute-Alsace and did her third year of the BA as an exchange year at Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania. She is currently doing an MA in English in Mulhouse, writing a thesis on Peter Jackson's cinematographic adaptations of *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien. After graduating, she intends to travel to New Zealand to visit the locations she studied for her thesis and find a job in the tourism industry.

Madeleine Pham-Thanh, University of Strasbourg

“The post-1848 Radical Autodidact Culture: J.J. Bezer's *Autobiography of One of the Chartist Rebels of 1848* (1851)”

Abstract:

In tune with the “biographical turn” taken by labour history, following G.D.H. Cole's *Chartist Portraits* (1941), and more recent historiographical interest in the recovery of working-class autobiographies as historical sources, this study focuses on J.J. Bezer's *Autobiography of One of the Chartist Rebels of 1848* (1851) as a political intervention within the post-Chartist radical movement. Shedding light upon the struggles of a popular, self-educated, unrepentant radical, to regain, through autobiographical writing, the agency he was denied as a political and social marginal, this paper pays particular attention to Bezer's stylistic inventiveness, based on the assumption that his idiolect contributes to the (re-)making of a popular counter-cultural sociolect. Here, the autobiographer's attempt to shape his own life and potentially shape the historical record as well meets the activist's claim to being represented—in his own terms. Substantiating the radical discourse as something drawn from lived experience, the life-narrative of this self-proclaimed “rebel” oscillates between the individualistic “I” of autobiography, and the generic subject indissociable from collective destiny.

This paper is part of a wider doctoral research into the memory of Chartist activism and the creation of a counter-historiography mediated through the lived experience of struggle, challenging such notions as a mid-Victorian Liberal “consensus”, and a late 19th century socialist “Revival”. Engaging with more recent “turns” and twists in Chartist historiography, my research sheds light on the Chartist movement's working-class credentials, the mid-Victorian old mole's radical credentials, while analysing the amount of tokenism involved in late Victorian social-democracy, claiming somewhat “old guard” Chartist credentials.

Bio:

Madeleine Pham-Thanh is working on a PhD dissertation on the memory and early historiography of Chartism, under the supervision of Neil Davie and Frédéric Herrmann (Lyon 2). She is currently a teaching assistant at the University of Strasbourg.

Eléonore Piot, University of Haute-Alsace

“Contemporary Native American Photography in the Online Press: How the Use of Photography Helps Deconstruct Stereotypes”

Abstract:

Some Native American artists make it their art’s mission to restore Native identities but also to educate non-native and Native people about their history. Wendy Red Star, Matika Wilbur, Cara Romero and Kali Spitzer are four contemporary Native artists who work with photography. They share a common goal, which is to restore the history of their ancestors and to fight against the stereotypes photography established at the beginning of the twentieth century. Wendy Red Star, of Aspaalooke (Crow) and Irish descent, has lectured at Yale University and at the California Institute of the Arts. Matika Wilbur is a member of the Swinomish and Tulalip tribes of Washington State; she worked as a teacher at the Tulalip Heritage High School for five years before starting her “Project 562.” Cara Romero is a Chemehuevi photographer who uses digital tools in her staged photographs. Kali Spitzer is Kaska Dena from Daylu on her father’s side and Jewish on her mother’s side. She uses different photography techniques to illustrate more truly the identities of the persons she chooses to work with.

In this presentation, I will compare reactions in the Native as well as the non-native press in order to examine differences in the critical reception of this body of photographic artwork. Different magazines and/or websites will be considered, among them, *Indian Country Today*, *Hyperallergic*, *Nativenewsonline*, *The New York Times*, and *Elle*. A total of 20 articles published between 2014 and 2021 will be examined. Using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) I will try to give a general idea of why the art of these four photographers is necessary for a change of mindset in society and in education. I will also try to identify ideological tendencies among the articles to better understand what the main themes of these artworks are and how they are presented by journalists.

The goal of this study is to obtain a better understanding of the influence of the press on the interpretation of artworks in order to provide answers to the following questions: What debates do the works of these Native American artists start? What exposure do these photographers give to the minority to which they belong? What are the artistic institutions exhibiting their works? Why is this work relevant both to Native and non-native cultures?

Bio:

Eléonore Piot is a second-year MA student at the UHA Mulhouse. In 2018 she obtained two undergraduate degrees in English Civilisation and French Literature at the same university. She spent her last year of undergraduate studies as an Erasmus student at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland. Currently, Eléonore is working on Native American photography, studying the works of contemporary Native Artists.

Eleanor Proctor, University of Haute-Alsace

“God Save the Queen? The Three ‘Main’ Parties of British Politics and the Evolution of Republican Thought”

Abstract:

Britain, one of the few countries to not have experienced any great revolutions nor changes in regime for several hundred years, has had more or less the same way of governing since 1688, i.e., a constitutional monarchy. Relying on the stereotype of a reverent people, for many the British appear to be enamoured of their monarch, and consequently any republican activity has mostly been characterised as insignificant. However, a radical republican undercurrent has always been present, no matter how quietly.

During the majority of this long stretch of history, the Labour Party, the Conservative and Unionist Party, and the Liberal Democrats (and their forebears) have been the three parties at the forefront of the British political arena. Of differing and sometimes conflicting views, theories and backgrounds, none of these main parties have suggested abolishing the monarchy, nor actively or vocally challenged it in parliament with any sustained fire-power. But does this necessarily mean that they support it? In this paper, we shall discuss the ways in which the three main parties in British politics have recently expressed and evolved their anti-monarchism ... if they have done so at all.

Bio:

Eleanor Proctor is working on a thesis entitled “British Republicanism in the 21st Century” (supervision Laurent Curelly) at the UHA Mulhouse. Her main research interests are centred around the monarchy and its opponents. Eleanor holds a BA in History of Art and French, completed in 2017 at Newcastle University, UK. After spending a year as a teaching assistant in Mulhouse she went on to obtain her Master’s degree in teaching with first-class honours at the UHA in 2020. She is now a full-time English teacher in secondary education and also teaches ‘anglais des médias’ and ‘thème’ at the university.

Anna Püntener, University of Basel

“Don’t get technical with me”: Droids, Cyborgs, and Individuality in *Star Wars Episode I-VI*

Abstract:

Droids and cyborgs are ubiquitous in *Star Wars*, whether as main characters or as sidekicks. Individuality and agency are crucial factors in how they are represented. In America, the myth that the (white male) individual with agency is the cornerstone of democracy and a free society is prevalent and still highly influential. The characterization of droids and cyborgs in *Star Wars* perpetuates this myth of individuality. In *Star Wars*’ highly Manichean worldview, droids with a high degree of individuality and agency are depicted as good, those with a low degree of individuality and agency as bad. This is slightly different with cyborgs. While their individuality is never in doubt, their degree of agency varies, and the way in which they deal with their cyborg identity is one of the factors in determining how they end up being represented. But *Star Wars* does not just draw on American individualism, it also displays the acute anxiety of its loss. Hence, in *Star Wars*, even though or maybe because it belongs to the science fiction genre, individualism goes hand in hand with technophobia: Technology threatens the individual and thus the social and political order.

Bio:

Anna Püntener holds a BA in English and German from the University of Basel, where she graduated in 2021. She is currently enrolled in Basel’s MA program in English and German.

Camille Rollando, University of Strasbourg

“A Matter of Appropriation: Introducing Foreign Bodies into the Canadian Landscape”

Abstract:

In an era of globalization, transnational movements have become commonplace, giving rise to countries becoming multicultural. There is now a need to reconsider how conventional senses of identity have been shattered, and to think about identity as a hybrid notion. As a result, in a multicultural country like Canada, how do we define Canadian identity? Can a person born on another continent and living in Canada be considered Canadian?

The body, the first visual element we distinguish and a vector of our origins or state of mind, is a crucial site for challenging power structures and politics of difference, as well as for confronting racial constructions that are inscribed on the body. In this way, the body as a marker of identity is a crucial element in the debate of belonging or non-belonging to a nation.

The purpose of this research is to focus on the artworks of Jin-me Yoon, a contemporary Korean-Canadian photographer, and how she uses the body as a marker of identity. In this presentation, I intend to explore the connection between identity and landscapes, and how Yoon stages the Asian body in traditional Canadian landscapes as a marked body, caught between two nations. By highlighting the use of the body as an ‘in-between’ identity, I aim to show Yoon’s questioning of how her Asian body has ‘inherited’ inaccurate identities superimposed onto it, leading the artist to question the constructed nature of Canadian identity, while deconstructing her own Asian-Canadian identity, and see what is beyond this hyphenated identity.

Bio:

After two years in Dijon, Camille Rollando decided to complete her third year of undergraduate studies at the University of Calgary, Canada. Following this year abroad, she enrolled in a first year of graduate studies, specializing in North American civilization in Dijon. To broaden her knowledge, she completed a first year of a Master’s degree in Religious History in Strasbourg in 2021. She is now in her second year of her Master’s degree in Anglophone Studies, studying contemporary Canadian photography under the supervision of Gwen Cressman.

Eva Rüskaamp, University of Freiburg

“Serving Up the American South: The Intersectional Politics of BBQ in Food Media”

Abstract:

“Barbecue brings people together. It makes people visit with each other more. People just slow down to speak to one another.” In the Netflix Original *Chef’s Table BBQ*, the first episode focuses on Tootsie Tomanetz, an 85-year-old Texan pitmaster, who expresses a sense of nostalgia informed by the political divisions that have deeply impacted American society. Indeed, for many the “simple” dish of barbecue invokes conviviality and such nostalgic imaginaries of a better American past. This representation, however, is at odds with food bearing the imprint of a complex region. Shaped by forced migration, enslavement and segregation, race, class and gender continue to stratify the American South. This manifests in food and foodways as in other forms of culture. Food media, including Netflix’s docuseries (*Chef’s Table: BBQ; High on the Hog; Cooked* etc.), make spectacles of barbecue, serving its socio-cultural contexts to audiences on a literal plate. Feeding into the stereotypical narratives of the region and its people, they perpetuate harmful existing mythologies and erase the uncomfortable histories and social realities of food in the South, which intertwine in the ‘simple’ dish of the BBQ. Critically engaging with the depictions of the Southern BBQ, as a spectacle that is equally a dish and a community event, can add to the understanding of the intersectional politics at work in the South. In the presentation, I will introduce a segment of the article, co-authored with Alkim Kutlu, to appear in a special collection on politics and food in *Politique Americaine* later this year.

Bio:

In 2019, Eva Rüskaamp joined the Chair of North American Studies at the University of Freiburg as a doctoral candidate. Her interdisciplinary doctoral thesis on “Caught Between Conservation and Transformation: Locating Rural Spaces and their Communities in the Sustainable Transition” focuses on questions of governance, identity, memory and rural renewal in the United States, including a case study on Southern and Central Appalachia. Beyond that, her research interests include Southern studies, cultural theory and environmental sociology. She teaches classes on American culture, media, history and politics, as well as environmental humanities and research methods at the English Seminar and the University College Freiburg.

Kristina Seefeldt, University of Freiburg

“Rescue Heroes: Heroism and the Military Complex”

Abstract:

In the US, the stereotypical role of a hero is connected to the idea of an aggressive warrior. He is male, dominating, and uses force to achieve his goal. However, the concept of a “rescue heroism” in the US military is an area less explored in the field of cultural studies. I argue that military rescue personnel and heroes who have rescued others on the battlefield showcase a different heroism based on values such as comradeship, saviorism and protectiveness. This form of heroism is portrayed, for instance, in movies such as *The Last Full Measure* (2019) by Todd Robinson, *Forest Gump* (1994) by Robert Zemeckis and *Hacksaw Ridge* (2016) by Mel Gibson. Moreover, I will contrast the role of rescue heroes with those in the civilian realm, namely police officers and firemen, in order to showcase the exceptional position rescue heroes have in the US military complex.

Bio:

Kristina Seefeldt is a doctoral student in English and American Studies at the University of Freiburg, Germany. Her PhD project is focused on “rescue heroes” in the US Armed Forces. She is a research assistant and the school project coordinator of the Research Center 948 “Heroes – Heroizations – Heroisms” in Freiburg. Her research interests are heroes and heroisms, masculinity studies, military and war studies, as well as film and audience studies.

Lucie Seelweger, University of Strasbourg

“Witches in Pre-Raphaelite Art: From Objectification to Self-expression”

Abstract:

This study focuses on the representation of the witch in Pre-Raphaelite visual arts, as it sheds light on the place and perception of women in their society. In most paintings, she is depicted as a dangerous, independent, and enticing—if not sexualized—woman. This representation is far from the ideal Victorian woman, who was to be pure, obedient, and caring. The paintings of witches expressed both the fantasies and fears of their male artists, who were fascinated by this powerful woman, but at the same time felt anxious about the questioning of gender

roles of the late Victorian era. In consequence, many of these paintings of witches are examples of the male gaze. The male gaze is a concept used in feminist theory to refer to the representation of women from a heterosexual and masculine point of view: such works depicted women as passive objects meant for male consumption, and were not intended to stand for any kind of emancipation for women.

Female Pre-Raphaelite artists, however, also created depictions of witches. Their focus was not on the destructive or seductive aspects that were to be found in men's representations of witches, but rather on their individuality and their strength. Women's artworks give us an insight into their own experiences in an era that dismissed their voices and made it harder for them to pursue an artistic career. Reclaiming the witch allowed them to explore gender roles, sexuality, and women's rights. This presentation will compare artworks made by female and male artists to analyse the way women artists interacted with Pre-Raphaelite witches and the male gaze.

Bio:

After two years of classe préparatoire in Metz, Lucie Seelweger joined the University of Strasbourg for her Bachelor's degree in English. She is currently a Master's student specializing in British civilisation. Her passion for myth and legends as well as her interest in art inspired her research project. (Supervisor: H  l  ne Ibata)

Thomas Studer, University of Basel

“Left-Wing Complacency in Walter Benjamin's and Christy Wampole's Thought and Leif Randt's *Allegro Pastell* (2020)”

Abstract:

During the 1930s, German thinker Walter Benjamin published several essays and smaller texts addressing what he called “left-wing melancholy”, i.e., a stance of luxurious distance, often characterized by self-referentiality and the use of irony. In 2012 and 2016 US-American Romance studies scholar Christy Wampole published two essays in *The New York Times* dealing with the sociological phenomenon of the “ironic hipster”. According to Wampole, the hipster of the 21st century behaves in strikingly similar ways to the melancholic leftists described by Benjamin nearly a century ago.

In 2020, German author Leif Randt published *Allegro Pastell*, a novel that has since been praised as the “perfect exploration of our present” and the “defining book for Randt's own generation”. *Allegro Pastell* tells the story of a heterosexual relationship between two German millennials over the course of the years 2018-2019. I intend to show how the phenomena described by Benjamin and Wampole play out in both the novel itself and the discourse on the novel. Randt employs a near clinical and irony-soaked language to tell about the lives of his ironic-narcissistic hipster protagonists. Just as these protagonists constantly reflect and enjoy themselves in this reflection, the feuilleton journalism on *Allegro Pastell* seems to enjoy being reflected by the novel—which might well account for *Allegro Pastell*'s popularity.

Bio:

Thomas Studer holds a BA in Art History and German from the University of Basel, where he currently studies towards his MA in Literary Studies.

Michelle Thompson, University of Freiburg

“Optimizing the Narrative Potential in Visual Representations of Ethnographic Research Results: Lessons from Joe Sacco's *Paying the Land*”

Abstract:

Working at the intersection of ethnographic field research and narrative theory means that I consider how I, and other ethnographers, can portray our research results in vivid, descriptive, but also narratively interesting ways. Although images, drawings, photographs, charts and other graphic representations have long been part of ethnographic research results, their narrative potential has not been theoretically considered in depth.

In this presentation, I look outside of ethnographic research to the graphic novel *Paying the Land* by comic journalist Joe Sacco as an example to discuss three (comic) narratological concepts: storyworld, narrator, and character subjectivities. My goal is to show that a greater understanding of these narratological concepts can help anthropologists or other social scientists when portraying their (field) research findings graphically, but also in narrative form or in addition to narrative textual form. I discuss some advantages of combining written and visual representations of research results, particularly in relation to the concepts of thick description (Geertz) and narrativity in ethnographic writing.

Bio:

Michelle Thompson is a doctoral candidate in cultural anthropology (Ethnologie) at the Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg. She began her PhD in 2018 with the DFG-funded Graduate School 'Factual and Fictional Narration'. Her research interests are the intersections of narrative research and ethnology, imagination, decolonization and reconciliation work in Canada and the topic of *Indianer* in Germany.

Cynthia Tran, University of Haute-Alsace

“*Crazy Rich Asians*: More than a Representation of ‘Racist Love’?”

Abstract:

Released in 2018, the romantic comedy *Crazy Rich Asians*, targeted at the Asian-American community and directed by Asian-American director Jon M. Chu, depicts the adventure of Rachel Chu, an Asian-American woman meeting her boyfriend’s family—who happen to be very rich. While some critics such as Peter Travers praised the movie for “making history” in terms of cultural and racial representation in Hollywood, others rejected such praise because they believe the movie plays up to positive stereotypes such as the model minority myth, which has grown to be disapproved of by the Asian American community in recent years.

While Frank Chin and Jeffery Paul Chan’s 1972 article “Racist Love” does not address the concept of a model minority per se, it forwards that in a dominantly white society, two racial stereotype models exist: the rejected “unacceptable model” and the preferred “acceptable model.” Focusing on the latter, their article explains how despite possessing a positive image and being associated with positive stereotypes, the acceptable model still stands for discrimination—a paradox which can also be found in the concept of the model minority that Asians and Asian Americans face in US society.

In this paper, I will ponder whether *Crazy Rich Asians* is more than a depiction of the model minority myth and will explore how the movie is at its core a story about the struggle of finding balance in the Asian American bicultural identity.

Bio:

After a year spent at the University of Strasbourg studying cinema, Cynthia Tran transferred to the University of Upper Alsace in Mulhouse to get a BA in English Studies. She is currently pursuing an MA in English. She is particularly interested in American cultural, racial, and social studies. Her work focuses on racial representation in popular culture and topical issues. Enthusiastic about the American entertainment industry (in particular Disney and Marvel’s movies), Tran wrote her M1 research paper on Walt Disney’s *MULAN*, winning the 2021 Badenweiler Stephen Crane Award.

Luca Valli, University of Basel

“‘Living off the river’: Alice Oswald’s *Dart* as a Model for a Holistic Ecolpoetics”

Abstract:

In her poem *Dart*, Alice Oswald creates an inclusive depiction of the English river Dart that encompasses not only the natural features of the river and its surrounding landscape, but also a plethora of human economic activities that are connected to the river. In so doing, Oswald creates a nature poem that does not merely contain an idealized and aestheticized depiction of a natural feature, but instead portrays the titular river as a complex ecological system that consists both of natural elements and human interventions. These human perspectives engendered by the economic exploitation of the river are counterbalanced by the presence of human voices that show a high degree of attentiveness to the environment. *Dart*’s depiction of exploitative human activity should not, as some have claimed, be seen as elements that diminish the poem’s status as a nature poem. Instead, not least because of the presence of human voices that take a more caring stance towards nature, they should be viewed as Oswald expressing what Lawrence Buell has identified as “the soundest [ecopoetic] position”, namely one that “[speaks] both to humanity’s most essential needs and to the state and fate of the earth”.

Bio:

Luca Valli is an MA student in English and History at the University of Basel.

Felix Zettner, University of Strasbourg

“Left or Right? A Diachronic Approach to Stress-Patterns in NN compounds”

Abstract:

The question of compound stress assignment has always been a tricky one—a “stress mess,” as Susan Schmerling (1971) emphatically writes, and she eventually surrenders to the idea that left or right stress in compounds are mere idiosyncrasies of the English language. But surface variation has been interpreted differently by other linguists. From attempts to explain the issue through syntax (e.g., Chomsky & Halle 1965, Lieberman & Sproat 1992, Giegerich 2004), over approaches that investigate specific semantic relations between the constituents which would trigger either left or right stress (Marchand 1969, Fudge 1984 among many others), to analogy-based interpretations (Arndt Lappe 2011 or Plag 2018, for instance), this presentation will give a brief overview of these main arguments defended in the literature.

Moreover, it will add to the discussion by exploring language change over time—a relatively neglected area vis-à-vis the issue at hand. Following the tradition of Boisson (1980), Moore Mauroux (2002) and Castanier (2016), this talk will present the first results from an ongoing lexicon-based study of a corpus of approximately 1800 NN compounds and their attested stress-patterns from 1913 to 2020. This study aims at analysing compound stress assignment in order to verify this diachronic stress shift hypothesis, which would be linked to the lexicalisation of the sequences. However, the talk will conclude on some empirical observations that unexpectedly challenge the aforementioned hypothesis.

Bio:

In 2019, Felix Zettner graduated from the University of Strasbourg with a Bachelor’s degree in English, after which he moved to the United Kingdom to be an au pair. One year later, he returned to Strasbourg for his Master’s thesis in English phonology under the supervision of Monika Pukli, which he is currently working on.

PLENARY TALK

Gwen Cressman, University of Strasbourg

“Borders beyond Nationalist Narratives in North American Photography”

Abstract:

As Herk van Houtum reminds us “the line is geometry, the border is interpretation” (Van Houtum, 2015, p. 49). Accordingly, the border needs to be understood beyond the borderline itself as “the socially constituent power practices (...) that construct a spatial effect and (...) give a demarcation in space its meaning and influence” (idem). This paper, which focuses on photographic representations of borders, will investigate the two North American borders between the US and Mexico and between the US and Canada, as social, political, and cultural constructions. The corpus includes relatively recent photographs by Canadian, American, Mexican, and Swiss photographers as well as images of the *Hostile Terrain 94* installation. These photographs invite us to look at the border beyond the line on a map or the wall in a landscape, and to understand the many processes by which the border inscribes itself on the land and on the body. I will argue that looking at these two North American borders through a dialectic of presence and absence produces insights into how the contested landscapes and bodyscapes at the border define and redefine the sense of place and belonging at the border beyond the national imaginaries these borders produce.

Bio:

Gwen Cressman is Associate Professor in North American Studies at the Département d’Etudes Anglophones, Faculté des Langues, Université de Strasbourg. Initially specialized in multicultural education and immigrant language policies in Canada, Gwen has more recently pursued her interests in migration, identities, and the representation of the other with a focus on documentary and conceptual photography in Canada. She is interested in the ways photographic representations of/at borders, landscapes, and territories articulate questions of identity and memory.

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