

University of Strasbourg, English Department, UR SEARCH 2325 and LiLPa

Programme Master 2 Study Day

November 29, 2021

Abstracts and bios

9h-9h15 **Opening remarks: H el ene Ibata and Monica Manolescu**

Chair: Ana is Tripodi

9h15-9h45 Joanna Gremaux, “End the War on Drug to reduce racial inequalities: The example of Oregon” (supervisor: Ghislain Potriquet)

Abstract. The United States has long struggled with drug abuse. In 1971, in the midst of a drug scare, President Nixon declared the War on Drugs and shaped the American anti-drug ideology. The War on Drugs thus refers to a series of laws aimed at punishing and deterring drug use. Today, drug abuse is still prevalent in the US despite 46% of the federal prison population being non-violent drug offenders. It causes dire inequalities, especially for African Americans who are disproportionately represented in drug-related convictions. Public opinion slowly shifts towards no longer endorsing punitive measures for drug offenses. The War on Drugs has a substantial economic and social cost and did not prove effective in managing drug abuse. In 2020, Oregon, a state particularly impacted by drug abuse, voted in favor of measure 110 which decriminalizes the possession of drugs and emphasizes prevention: a new approach to the drug crisis.

This essay explores the various socio-economic factors that led to the disproportionate impact of the War on Drugs on African Americans such as inequalities of opportunities, selective enforcement of the law, and racial prejudice. It also discusses divisive questions such as the critical race theory, the extent of individual freedom, and possible alternatives to the current drug prohibition and their consequences. Finally, this essay puts a particular emphasis on the state of Oregon, as the potential cornerstone of drug decriminalization.

Bio. I am in the second year of a Master’s degree in Anglophone studies. I specialize in American civilization and work on a master thesis on the racial inequalities engendered by the War on Drugs and the state of Oregon as an example of an alternative to prohibition.

9h45-10h15 Paola Lopez, “National Myths and Complex Identities: The 1975 Referendum and Britain’s Identity Crisis” (supervisor: Pauline Collombier-Lakeman)

Abstract. The 1975 British referendum on Common Market membership brought about questions of national identity and the destiny of the British Empire. This came at a moment in time where the U.K experienced great distress and disorientation resulting from the political and social pressure and uncertainty about their role in the new international landscape. As a paraphernalia of propaganda was published during the campaign, both sides of the debate relied heavily on the use of national myths to appeal to a shared sense of national identity. Some of these myths can be traced back to the beginning of the United Kingdom, whilst some others

date back only to the Second World War; what they all have in common is that they all reveal a unique layer of the ongoing and never-ending construction of Britain's identity. Despite a growing body of literature on the 2016 British referendum and on British national identity, scholars largely neglect the importance and precedence set by the 1975 referendum and the intertwining between the latter and the contemporary state of British identity. Through a study of the pamphlets that were published during the campaign, this paper seeks to identify the national myths that were present in the rhetoric of the referendum to understand how they reinforce the idea of the "nation" and argues that these national myths helped solidify, up to a certain extent, the shared consciousness and identity of the United Kingdom in relation to itself and its past, but also to Europe and the world. Ultimately, this study aims to show how national myths serve the nationalist ideology by adapting and (sometimes) distorting a nation's past.

Bio. Paola Lopez is a second year Master student at the University of Strasbourg with an interest in contemporary British history and the concepts of "nation" and "nationalism." She completed her Bachelors' degree in Anglophone studies also at the University of Strasbourg. She currently works as a Development Officer for a Human Rights organization that works with the ECtHR in Strasbourg.

10h15-10h30 Coffee break

Chair: Sophie Lambea

10h30-11h Ambrine Baader, "Empowerment or objectification? The representation of the female body in the *Game of Thrones* series" (supervisor: Sophie Mantrant)

Abstract. HBO's series *Game of Thrones* was one of the most popular series of the last decade, gathering millions of viewers for each episode broadcasted. It has become well-known especially for its blunt depictions of war, violence or sex and thrived on its reputation of being provocative and on playing with societal taboos. The subversive aspect the most commented upon would arguably be the depiction of its female characters. Indeed, the series was as much praised for its portrayal of strong female characters as it was criticised for its numerous, and often unnecessary, scenes of female nudity.

By focusing on the representation of femininity and female nudity in *Game of Thrones*, this study will show that beneath its reputation of being subversive, the TV series actually falls into a much more conventional and traditional depiction of femininity. When its literary basis, *A Song of Ice and Fire* written by George R.R. Martin, depicted a large panel of strong, emancipated female characters, the adapted counterpart falls back into a more heteronormative scope, and even debunks any progressive aspect the literary saga managed to establish. This paper will therefore look closely at the role played by the audiovisual medium in putting the female characters back to their conventional status of objects of the male gaze.

Bio. After completing a bachelor's degree in English studies at the University of Strasbourg, Ambrine went to work as a language and boarding assistant in a boarding school in England. There, she grew interested in the relation between popular culture and contemporary concerns such as gender studies or postcolonialism. She then went back to Strasbourg to pursue her Master's thesis on the relation between *Game of Thrones* and feminism, under the supervision of Mrs Sophie Mantrant.

11h-11h30 Lucie Seelweger, “Witches in Pre-Raphaelite art: from objectification to self-expression?” (supervisor: H  l  ne Ibata)

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 portraits 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. When produced by men, these representations were meant for male consumption, and the witch was not meant 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 power and their strength, with some artworks creating parallels between the witch of the painting and the painter herself. This allows us to study these paintings of witches in contrast with the ones made by male artists: women used the same theme, but from their different point of view, in order to talk about their own experiences in an era that dismissed women's voices and made it harder for them to pursue an artistic career. My goal is to study the way women reappropriated the Pre-Raphaelite witch and the narratives they told through her.

Bio. After two years of classe pr  paratoire 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.

11h30-12h Camille Rollando, “‘Beyond the Hyphen’: The representation of Asian migration and identity construction in contemporary Canadian visual art” (supervisor: Gwen Cressman)

Abstract. In an era of globalization, transnational movements have become commonplace, given rise to countries becoming multicultural. The concept of the ‘imagined community’ - coined by Benedict Anderson - which had previously served as a reliable source of social identity, is now being questioned. There is now a need to reconsider how conventional senses of identity have been shattered, and think about identity as a hybrid notion. As a result, in a multicultural country like Canada, how does one define Canadian identity? Can a person, born on another continent and living in Canada, be considered Canadian?

By studying the artworks of three Canadian artists of Asian origin, this paper will seek to study how Asian immigrants have adapted to a new culture and a new territory, as well as the major issues they encountered. While adopting a research strategy focused on diasporic studies, my paper will consider the representations of identity in a multicultural country, and examine this construction of identity in contemporary art. The analysis of the various artistic projects produced by Jin-me YOON, Ken LUM and Paul WONG will allow me to highlight the images and metaphors used by the artists to represent the perceptions of past identities as well as the connections between individuals, places and memories. My analysis will show how those three Asian-Canadian artists used the genre of landscape photography in order to question the constructed ‘nature’ of Canadian identity, but also to deconstruct their Asian-Canadian identity, and see what is “beyond the hyphen.”

Bio. After two years in Dijon, Camille Rollando decided to complete her third year of Bachelor Degree (English Major) at the University of Calgary, Alberta. Back in Dijon, she completed a M1 Research in English Studies, specialized in North American civilization. To broaden her knowledge, in 2020 she integrated a M1 in History of Religions in Strasbourg. Back in the LLCER Master, Camille is now specializing in Canadian civilization.

12h-13h Buffet lunch

Chair: Chloé Bour-Lang

13h-13h30 Marianne Zottner, “Unlocking his heart: the reception of homosexuality in Shakespeare’s *Sonnets* during the Imperialist Victorian era” (supervisor: Rémi Vuillemin)

Abstract. During the Victorian era, debates surrounding the different interpretations of Shakespeare’s *Sonnets* held a predominant part in the discussion on the collection of poems. Different theories were enounced, but the biographical interpretation of the *Sonnets* is one that comes to the foreground when looking at the homoeroticism possibly present in the text. Sidney Lee was a major figure of Shakespearian studies at the end of the nineteenth century, his biography of the Bard (*A Life of Shakespeare*) was reedited and even adapted in a version for students to reach a wider audience. Our analysis will focus on his portrayal of the different variations when interpreting the *Sonnets*, seeing how his undermining of the biographical interpretation can be witnessed in his texts. From his choice of words to his attempts to shift the possible immorality on anyone rather than Shakespeare himself, Lee chose to produce a biography that revoked completely the biographical interpretation which was gaining attention at the time. In this presentation, we will study the construction of his argument against the biographical element and how his want to protect Shakespeare’s morality was a reflection of how the poet was characterized in the Victorian era.

Bio. Marianne Zottner is currently a Master’s student at the University of Strasbourg. She specialises in literature, but her interests lean toward cultural studies and the reception of literary works. At the moment, her attention is focused on the reception of Shakespeare’s *Sonnets* during the Victorian era.

13h30-14h Dane Coult, “Language and Alienation in David Foster Wallace’s *Infinite Jest*,” (supervisor: Monica Manolescu)

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 constructed nature of reality, the “referential murkiness” of language, and the artificiality of literary form, Wallace sought to reaffirm literature’s capacity for communicating with readers and for asserting truths regarding 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. Wallace thereby demonstrates that the inevitable conclusions of postmodernism lead to a world of alienation and solipsism from which more contemporary forms of literature must find an escape. This paper focuses on two characters from the novel, Hal Incandenza, and Don Gately, who demonstrate, in the case of the former, the nightmarish results of postmodern linguistic destabilization and, in the case of the latter, literature's potential for redemption.

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.

14h-14h30 Emilie Fritsch, "Taming the lion, freeing the tiger: the use and subversion of anthropocentric values in Blake's poetry" (supervisor: Rémi Vuillemin)

Abstract. Blake's use of symbolic animals has garnered much praise from Ecocritics. They have been understood as respectful, empowering depictions that put into question the anthropocentric view of the world that places mankind at the top of its hierarchy. However, Blake's representation of animals has also received its fair share of criticism. Indeed, there are many contradictions in Blake's work that could explain the lack of consensus: his animals can be reduced to commonly-accepted stereotypes built by an arbitrary human judgment, but they can also be unique, mysterious, and endowed with a complexity that goes far beyond the limits of those stereotypes.

In order to understand how such contradictions coexist in his poetry, and what conclusions can be drawn regarding Blake's intentions in using animals the way he did, one cannot rely on the texts alone. Therefore, we wish to propose an Ecocritical reading of Blake's symbolic animals that brings into relation a close analysis of the texts with a study of eighteenth-century culture with regard to how animals were perceived in broader society to develop a new understanding of what is at stake in Blake's representation of animals.

This presentation will focus on the examples of the tiger and the lion, two similar animals that become symbols with entirely different purposes in Blake's poems. Upon first reading, one might believe the matter is quite simple: his lion embodies virtue, and his tiger evil. However, when studied in relation to the anthropocentric values of the era, new questions arise to challenge the idea that an Ecocritical reading should find the lion to be the superior animal.

Bio. Emilie Fritsch is a second-year Master student in English. 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.

14h30-15h Coffee Break

Chair: Michaël Sacre

15h-15h30 Komi Adogli, "Contextualizing linguistic features in legal discourse: a study of the African Union's treaties" (supervisor: Catherine Paulin)

Abstract. One of the fields of linguistics that have undergone noticeable developments in recent decades is discourse analysis. This discipline can boast of various models and tools devised for describing and analyzing both oral and written language. Scholars who see a connection between language features and communicative functions deem that the context surrounding a discourse is as crucial as the discourse itself, hence the emphasis they put on investigating and unveiling the impact of the context. To analyze a text for instance, Douglas Biber and Susan Conrad, both professors of applied linguistics favor the register perspective. Such a method seeks to establish a functional link between textual linguistic features and circumstances related to the production of a text.

Now, how does such approach apply to treaties produced by an international political organization of African countries? The African Union's treaties are legal texts, but can legal register be said to account for all the specificities of the texts? Why is deontic modality extensively used in these treaties?

This paper argues that linguistic singularity may not be explained exclusively in terms of register. The African Union's treaties, though featuring the basic characteristics of any legal language, bear linguistic particularities that could be traced to the authors, their intent, or their history. Analysis will consist of a quantitative description of linguistic features present in the treaties. However, my objective is to go further and to explain how the use of certain lexicogrammatical features in a good number of these texts reflects the underlying intention to build an African collective identity.

Bio. Komi Adogli is interested in applied linguistics and works as a translator and English language teacher. He holds an M.A. in translation and is currently completing a master's degree in English studies at the University of Strasbourg.

15h30-16h Félix Zettner, “Left or Right?” A diachronic approach to stress-patterns in noun+noun compounds” (supervisor: Monika Pukli)

Abstract. For linguists wanting to paint a comprehensive picture of English phonology, the question of compound stress assignment has always been a tricky one—a “stress mess,” as Susan Schmerling (1971) emphatically writes. Although she eventually surrenders to the idea that left or right stress in compounds are mere idiosyncrasies of the English language, other linguists' approaches to this problem have been diverse. From attempts to explain the issue through syntax, over approaches that investigate specific semantic relations between the constituents which would trigger either left or right stress, to less abstract approaches centred around analogy, this presentation will give a brief overview of these main arguments defended in the literature.

Moreover, it will add to the discussion by exploring one aspect of language—change in time—which had often been left out of the works defining the aforementioned approaches, or whose effects had merely been assumed in others. That is to say, some authors have hypothesised that with time, compounds tend to be increasingly stressed on the left constituent. Therefore, this talk will present the first results of a lexicon-based study of a corpus of approximately 2000 noun+noun compounds and their attested stress-patterns from 1948 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.

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, which he is currently working on.

16h-16h30 Julia Martin, "The role of information structure in the enhancement of suspense: the example of Agatha Christie's novel *And Then There Were None* (1939)" (supervisor: Stéphane Kostantzer)

Abstract. In her mystery novel *And Then There Were None*, Agatha Christie sets up an intricate and suspenseful puzzle: 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... From a linguistic perspective, this suspenseful narrative constitutes a stimulating corpus, as it offers the challenge to try to pinpoint the devices operating at sentence level which might contribute to its engaging nature. But what if syntax was itself one of these devices? Indeed, word order can reflect communicative intentions by interacting with the way information is distributed and could even destabilize our own perception of fictional events. This is why it could be used as a strategy to increase suspense in the novel. To better understand this correlation between information structure and narrative tension, this presentation will seek to determine how the author's selection of particular morphosyntactic constructions might enhance the suspenseful aspect of the narrative and, consequently, the readers' emotional response to it.

Bio. I am a master's student in anglophone studies and I specialize in linguistics. I completed my bachelor's degree in English at the University of Strasbourg after spending part of my third year in Chicago. Last summer, I worked as a research assistant for the University of Windsor, Canada.