



Building Upper Rhenish English Studies: Anniversary Postgraduate Workshop

EARS 30 – Histoire et avenir de
l'anglistique dans le Rhin supérieur :
Atelier anniversaire jeunes chercheurs

EARS 30 – Geschichte und Zukunft der
Anglistik am Oberrhein: **Jubiläums-
Postgraduirtenforschungsatelier**

THE

COMPLETE CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

includes a book of abstracts, keywords, and biographies

10 and 11 April 2025

At the MISHA: 5 allée du Général Rouvillois
Salle des conférences & Salle de la table ronde



36 talks given

by twenty-seven MA
and nine PhD students,
mediated by twelve chairs

2 round tables and 1 workshop

with eleven professors
and specialists

4 universities:

Strasbourg, Mulhouse,
Freiburg, and Basel
+ Kent (guest partner)

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

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THURSDAY, APRIL 10

→

ARRIVAL OF THE PARTICIPANTS AT THE MISHA VENUE

9.30–10AM

WELCOMING WORDS (SALLE DES CONFÉRENCES)

From Thomas Mohnike (Dean of the Faculty of Languages, University of Strasbourg) and Mathilde Jacq (Deputy Director at EUCOR)

10–11AM

ROUND TABLE ON ENGLISH STUDIES IN EUROPE AND THE UPPER RHINE REGION

With Pr. Dr. Monika Fludernik (Freiburg), Pr. Albert Hamm (Strasbourg), and Pr. Dr. Balz Engler (Basel)

Moderator: Pr. Anne Bandry (Strasbourg)

11–11.30AM

COFFEE BREAK

11.30AM–1PM

PARALLEL WORKSHOPS 1 AND 2

CLICK on the titles to
READ the speakers' abstracts, keywords & bios!

Workshop 1 – Nineteenth-Century Gender Roles and Education

Salle de la table ronde – Chair: Martin Theiller (Strasbourg)

Carlotta Wolfram MA STUDENT, FREIBURG	Voices from the Mills: Working-Class Women Writers from Victorian Britain
Mai Spörri MA STUDENT, BASEL	Curious <i>And</i> True – How Elizabeth Gaskell's "Curious, If True" (1860) Critiques the Idealised Incurious Woman in Fairy Tales

Workshop 2 – From Page to Stage: Human and Material Theatricality

Salle des conférences – Chair: Aude Martin (Strasbourg)

Vanille Reintjes PHD CANDIDATE, STRASBOURG	Sir Guyon, Verdant and the Poetic Defacing of Chivalric Ideals in Edmund Spenser's <i>The Faerie Queene</i>
Chang Shu MA STUDENT, FREIBURG	"All the World's a Stage, and All the Men and Women Merely Players": Looking into the Costumes of Anne and Richard in Shakespeare's <i>Richard III</i>
Jonas Biedermann MA STUDENT, BASEL	The Mathematics of Metatheatre in Stoppard's <i>Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead</i>

1–2.30PM

BUFFET LUNCH

AND SPEED NETWORKING

2.30PM–4PM

PARALLEL WORKSHOPS 3 AND 4

Workshop 3 – (Re)Constructing Meaning and Code-Switching

Salle de la table ronde – Chair: Julia Martin (Strasbourg)

Kimberley Rivière MA STUDENT, STRASBOURG	The Evolution of the Representation of AAVE in Non-African American Literature from 1852 to 2009
Nicole Faller MA STUDENT, FREIBURG	From Jim to James: Code-Switching, Literacy Acquisition, and Self-Empowerment in Percival Everett's <i>James</i>
Haykanush Sazhumyan PHD CANDIDATE, FREIBURG	The Effects of Aspect on Meaning Interpretation in the Online and Offline Processing of Modal Constructions

Workshop 4 – Landscapes and Emotions Through Real and Imaginary Identities
Salle des conférences – Chair: Arman Martirosyan (Strasbourg)

Stefanie Heeg PHD CANDIDATE, BASEL	Space, Travel and Maps – Digitally Mapping Early Modern Travel Accounts
Thomas Manson PHD CANDIDATE, BASEL	How to See the Country: Thomas Hardy, Tristram Hillier and the Space Between the “What Is and the What Might Be”
Henrike Kattoll MA STUDENT, FREIBURG	The Cruel Boys in the Closet: Emotions, Imagination, and the Performance of Queer Identity

4–4.30PM **COFFEE BREAK**

4.30PM–6PM **PARALLEL WORKSHOPS 5 AND 6**

Workshop 5 – Empowerment and Challenges in Feminism and Mental Health
Salle de la table ronde – Chair: Letizia Iris Federica Ambrosetti (Basel)

Fariel Amarouche MA STUDENT, MULHOUSE	The Celebration of Women’s Suffrage in the United Kingdom
Thiziri Reguig MA STUDENT, MULHOUSE	The Hands that Reach Out: New Realism in <i>Without Merit</i>
Babone Diatta MA STUDENT, MULHOUSE	The Flaws of Feminism: #MeToo and Intersectionality in Roxane Gay’s <i>Bad Feminist</i>

Workshop 6 – Black Voices in Literature and Media Studies
Salle des conférences – Chair: Tamara Dima Imboden (Basel)

Lynda Moulla MA STUDENT, MULHOUSE	The Undying Battle: Intersections of Race and Class in Claudia Rankine’s <i>Citizen</i> and Richard Wright’s <i>Uncle Tom’s Children</i>
Yanis Antolini MA STUDENT, STRASBOURG	From Difficult Archive to Symbol of Resistance: A Study of the Role of the Southern Tree in Beyoncé’s Afro-Feminist Utopia in <i>Lemonade</i>
Valerie Caillet MA STUDENT, FREIBURG	Reimagining the Female Presidency in Contemporary Storytelling

→ **RETURN TO THE SALLE DES CONFÉRENCES FOR PRACTICAL INFORMATION**

6–7PM **FREE TIME FOR EXCHANGE**

7.30PM **CONVIVIAL DINNER**
At L’Ancrage Café KaleidosCoop
Address: 5 Rue de la Coopérative

FRIDAY, APRIL 11

→ ARRIVAL AT THE MISHA VENUE

8.30–9AM COFFEE AND CROISSANTS

9–11AM PARALLEL WORKSHOPS 7 AND 8

Workshop 7 – Words in Motion: Writing, Translating, and Communicating Salle de la table ronde – Chair: Wanessa B. Machado (Freiburg)

Anna Nowicka MA STUDENT, FREIBURG	AI-based Translation of Poetry – The Case of Polish-English Language Pair
Khadidja Guettouche MA STUDENT, MULHOUSE	Bridging Languages: The Role of L1 in L2 Acquisition
Abd Alaziz Aljurf MA STUDENT, STRASBOURG	Emojis and Politeness Strategies: A Study in Pragmatics
Boualem Amraoui MA STUDENT, MULHOUSE	ESL Writing: Why Motivation is Just One Piece of the Story

Workshop 8 – Outsiders and Insiders: Literature, Belonging, and Identity Salle des conférences – Chair: Thomas Manson (Basel)

Marwa Selmi MA STUDENT, MULHOUSE	In the Shadow of the Café: Exploring Misfitting and Belonging in Carson McCullers' <i>The Ballad of The Sad Café</i>
Kodjo Ananivi MA STUDENT, MULHOUSE	Israelite vs. African American Slavery: Zora Neale Hurston's <i>Moses Man of the Mountain</i>
Tamara Dima Imboden PHD CANDIDATE, BASEL	"I Am an Insider": Returning 'Home' in Shze-Hui Tjoa's <i>The Story Game</i>

11–11.30AM COFFEE BREAK

11.30AM–12.30PM ROUND TABLE ON THE UPPER RHINE REGION AND THE ANGLOPHONE WORLD
With Pr. Jean-Jacques Chardin (Strasbourg), Pr. Dr. Stefanie Lethbridge (Freiburg), Pr. Dr. Wolfgang Hochbruck (Freiburg), and Pr. Anne Bandry (Strasbourg)
Moderator: Pr. Noëlle Cuny (Mulhouse)

12.30–1.30PM BUFFET LUNCH

1.30–2PM FINANCING POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH PROJECTS AND COLLABORATIONS
With Camille Dieudonné, International Projects Engineer from the Pôle unique d'ingénierie of the University of Strasbourg

2PM–3.30PM PARALLEL WORKSHOPS 9 AND 10

Workshop 9 – Innovative Approaches to Language Learning and Pedagogy Salle de la table ronde – Chair: Haykanush Sazhumyan (Freiburg)

Wanessa B. Machado PHD CANDIDATE, FREIBURG	From English to Science: Expanding Performative Didactics Beyond Language
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Nassim Bouziani MA STUDENT, MULHOUSE	When Your Mind Goes Blank: How to Better Understand Speaking Anxiety in the Classroom
Laura Selma MA STUDENT, STRASBOURG	Rhythm of Songs and English Stress Patterns

Workshop 10 – The Language of Eco-Fiction: Poetry and Politics
Salle des conférences – Chair: Vanille Reintjes (Strasbourg)

Letizia I. F. Ambrosetti PHD CANDIDATE, BASEL	The Subject of Climate Change: Political, Poetic, and Psychological Dimensions in Contemporary Eco-Fiction
Tristan Ratieuville MA STUDENT, STRASBOURG	Vegetal “Language” in Richard Powers’ <i>The Overstory</i> : A Literary Experiment of Translation and Communication
Juni Kvarving PHD CANDIDATE, KENT (UK)	Solving Climate Crisis: Crime and Complicity in <i>Hummingbird Salamander</i> by Jeff VanderMeer

3.30–4PM **COFFEE BREAK**

4–5.30PM **PARALLEL WORKSHOPS 11 AND 12**

Workshop 11 – Articulating Literature and Identities in Screen and Audio Adaptations
Salle de la table ronde – Chair: Stefanie Heeg (Basel)

Charlotte Lamontagne PHD CANDIDATE, STRASBOURG	Self-Reflexivity and the Audiobook Medium – The Case of Nabokov’s <i>Pale Fire</i>
Valentina Lasso Melenje MA STUDENT, MULHOUSE	Beyond Spanglish: Latino Representation Through Language in <i>Modern Family</i>
Irina Barbet MA STUDENT, STRASBOURG	Musical Performances in Roald Dahl’s <i>Charlie and the Chocolate Factory</i> and their Adaptations on Screen

Workshop 12 – Beyond Boundaries: Fantasies, Utopias, and Dystopias
Salle des conférences – Chair: Juni Kvarving (Kent)

Emma Ney MA STUDENT, STRASBOURG	Scales and Braids: The Dragon-Woman in the Cycle of <i>Earthsea</i> by Ursula K. Le Guin
Theresa J. Marx MA STUDENT, FREIBURG	Hybrid Futures: Undoing Gender and Species Binaries in Haraway’s “The Camille Stories” and Lemire’s <i>Sweet Tooth</i>
Charline Rubrecht MA STUDENT, MULHOUSE	The Utopian Ending in Tahereh Mafi’s Dystopian Novel <i>Shatter Me</i> (2011)

→ **RETURN TO THE SALLE DES CONFÉRENCES**

5.30PM **CONCLUDING WORDS FROM THE ORGANISERS**
The Strasbourg organising team: Pr. Rémi Vuillemin, Aude Martin, Julia Martin, Chloé Bour-Lang, Martin Theiller, and Arman Martirosyan

THE BOOK OF

abstracts, keywords and bios

Follows the order of the speakers in the programme

1. CARLOTTA WOLFRAM (MA, FREIBURG) | Voices from the Mills: Working-Class Women Writers from Victorian Britain

My study aims to illustrate how the Victorian poets Eliza Cook, Ellen Johnston, Fanny Forrester, Jessie Russell and Ethel Carnie navigate the intersections of class and gender under industrial capitalism. The recollection of their works has only begun in the late 1990s/early 2000s. I investigate how they write about labour and women's roles in it, and more generally how the working classes are portrayed in the poems. I specifically examine whether there can be found moments of class consciousness and solidarity. The contexts of periodical publishing and material conditions under which these poets wrote are crucial for the critical consideration of their literature.

Themes such as gender oppression, urban vs. rural labour, motherhood, morality, class divisions and the physical and emotional toil of factory work as well as "domestic" labour are explored through the recurring imagery of light and darkness (and day and night). Expressing the lived realities of working women who write poses difficulties within dominant Victorian conceptions of femininity and domesticity. Yet, I claim that these poets, in different ways, manage to valorise labouring women. This reaches from subtle manners of criticism from within to outright declarations of class antagonism and invocations of women's rights.

Under the lens of Marxist approaches to literature and close readings I demonstrate how these women used poetry both as a site of resistance to oppressive structures and as a means of expressing their experiences and identities within the constraints of Victorian social and cultural norms. Rhythm, oral culture, and the communal experience of poetry are central to women's poetry. With the help of Bourdieu's framework of capital and cultural legitimacy, I show that the women's work, often dismissed as lacking in refinement and excluded from the canon, values lived experience over aesthetic formalism. Engaging with working-class writing opens our understanding of literature and extends its designated functions.

Working-class women's poems 1860s–1914; intersections of class and gender under industrial capitalism; class consciousness and solidarity; discourses of domesticity; marginalized voices in periodical publishing; rhythm, oral culture, and the communal experience of poetry.

CARLOTTA WOLFRAM has studied English Literatures and Cultures at the University of Bonn and at the University of Aberdeen and at the moment is finishing her MA in English Literatures and Literary Theory in Freiburg. She is interested in women's literature from the Renaissance to the present, early modern England, feminist theory and the relationship between class and literature.

2. MAI SPÖRRI (MA, BASEL) | Curious *And* True – How Elizabeth Gaskell’s “Curious, If True” (1860) Critiques the Idealised Incurious Woman in Fairy Tales

Elizabeth Gaskell’s Gothic tale “Curious, If True” (1860) exemplifies the complex, reciprocal relationship between reality and fiction. Using defamiliarization, Gaskell prompts the reader to reflect on the tale’s fictionality, as well as on the well-known fairy tales it references.

By analysing the role of the narrator, the portrayal of Bluebeard’s wife in Charles Perrault’s original version in contrast to Gaskell’s reinterpretation, and the definitions of the word “curious,” this paper aims to demonstrate that, consistent with Gaskell’s Unitarian beliefs, the tale can be read as a critique of the idealised, incurious wife promoted by fairy tales.

Elizabeth Gaskell; 19th-century women writers; fairy tales; curiosity; gender dynamics.

MAI SPÖRRI is an MA student at the University of Basel, Switzerland, where she studies Literary Studies with a focus on English and French literature. She completed her BA at the University of Basel in English and French and spent a semester at the University of Lausanne in Spring 2022. In Autumn 2024, she studied at the University of Manchester as part of the Erasmus Exchange Programme. Her main interests include 19th-century literature, women’s writing, and cli-fi.

3. VANILLE REINTJES (PHD, STRASBOURG) | Sir Guyon, Verdant and the Poetic Defacing of Chivalric Ideals in Edmund Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene*

Edmund Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene* (1590; 1596) is an Elizabethan epic poem that interweaves moral, religious and political themes through the quests led by knights who personify virtues such as Holiness, Temperance and Chastity. While Spenser draws upon Arthurian legend and the late medieval chivalric code of honour, his poem remains deeply rooted in the ethical and aesthetic concerns of the early modern period.

This paper examines the notion of Disfigured Chivalry when focusing on the encounter between Sir Guyon and Verdant in the Bower of Bliss (Book II, Canto xii). Once a noble knight, Verdant is found by Sir Guyon disarmed and nestled in the arms of the sorceress Acrasia—an allegorical figure widely interpreted as representing Queen Elizabeth I’s Catholic rival and cousin, Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots. In this episode, Spenser opposes the two knights as distorted reflections of one another: while Sir Guyon upholds his virtue, Verdant succumbs to sin, thereby forfeiting his noble chivalric identity. Physical and moral ugliness is thus born out of the active melancholic process of surrender and passivity in the face of evil beauty.

My analysis focuses on Spenser’s use of poetic portraits and blazons to highlight the heraldic significance of Verdant’s downfall and “defacement”—a term used by Spenser and which, according to A. C. Hamilton’s double translation in his edition of *The Faerie Queene*, encompasses both physical disfiguration and moral disgrace. I argue that the process of defacing reflects the ruin of chivalric values and exposes the perils of moral corruption within the context of Renaissance poetics.

Edmund Spenser's The Faerie Queene (1590, 1596); Book II, Canto xi and Canto xii or The Bower of Bliss Episode; the heraldic and poetic blazon; disfigured chivalry and ugly knighthood.

VANILLE REINTJES is a first-year PhD student and teaching assistant at the University of Strasbourg, specialising in Elizabethan poetry and working under the joint supervision of Professor Rémi Vuillemin (Université de Strasbourg) and Professor Ladan Niayesh (Université Paris Cité). Her research is dedicated to investigating portrayals of ugliness in Edmund Spenser's epic poem, *The Faerie Queene*, studied in their multiple roles within the poem's spiritual, political, and aesthetic dimensions.

4. CHANG SHU (MA, FREIBURG) | "All the World's a Stage, and All the Men and Women Merely Players": Looking into the Costumes of Anne and Richard in Shakespeare's *Richard III*

The paper argues that the hybridity of Elizabethan and modern fashion in the costume designs is a vehicle for depicting Anne's spectral presence and Richard's displaceable masculinity. The conflation of garments from different epochs creates an aporetic locale that heightens the performativity of gender and encourages reimaginings of subversive discourses that reify gender and cultural transgressions.

The analysis is framed with postfeminist theories on the topic of the female Gothic. The theoretical chapter collects terms such as victim feminism and spectral femininity/masculinity. These notions are pivotal for Anne's ghostly period ensemble. Her specter plays a significant role the night before the Battle of Bosworth Field. Anne's wardrobe designs are interpreted with references to Shakespeare's *Richard III*, leading to a discussion of the symbolic meaning behind the production's amelioration in the reimagined garments and the adapted scenes that amplify Anne's presence on stage and retell her story. Furthermore, the paper alludes to preceding designs that have stylized Richard's Machiavellianism, underscoring their continuity, and the stark introduction of punk elements in the 2024 adaption.

Adding to Kirwan's review of the enacted political coercion in the play, the paper discerns current markers of masculinity in Richard's costumes, and points to their parodic features and displaceability. Stage and prop designs from the latest production by the Globe are examined with the approach of spectral masculinity. The purpose of this reading is to highlight the instability of functioning masculine frames of meaning and the tenuity of the link between masculinity and power.

Costume; play; retelling; spectrality; gender.

CHANG SHU is completing her MA in English Literatures and Literary Theory at the University of Freiburg. Her research interests are narratives in the Gothic mode and post/late feminist theory.

5. JONAS BIEDERMANN (MA, BASEL) | The Mathematics of Metatheatre in Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*

In Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, mathematical ideas abound. Prominent examples, such as the game of coin tossing which yields an implausible streak of “heads,” have been analysed in support of numerous readings regarding questions of determinism, agency, and existentialism. However, despite the play's explicit references to mathematical concepts, few scholars have placed mathematics at the centre of their analysis. Doing so enables us to see how mathematics is presented as an episteme symbolic of absolute, infallible certainty, while at the same time comically undermining itself. This foregrounds the lack of implacable values which playwright and critic Lionel Abel centred in his 1963 coining of the term “metatheatre.” This effect is enhanced by the status of probability theory as a compromise—a mathematical approach to questions that cannot be answered with mathematical surety. Analysing the coin toss with some mathematical rigour suggests an interesting approach to how audiences evaluate (im)probable events onstage, providing an interpretation of metatheatre that runs counter to Abel's original concept.

Metatheatre; probability; mathematics; Tom Stoppard; Hamlet.

JONAS BIEDERMANN is currently completing his MA in English and Mathematics at the University of Basel, having spent a semester abroad at the University of Manchester in 2023. His main interests are British and Irish drama and poetry, with a particular focus on quantitative, digital and interdisciplinary approaches. In 2019, he attended the W.B. Yeats Summer School in Sligo, and throughout his studies, he has been active in student and amateur theatre, including co-directing the first Swiss English-language production of Tom Stoppard's *Arcadia* in 2024. He is currently working on his MA thesis on mathematics and metatheatre in the works of Tom Stoppard.

6. KIMBERLEY RIVIÈRE (MA, STRASBOURG) | The Evolution of the Representation of AAVE in Non-African American Literature from 1852 to 2009

African American Vernacular English (AAVE) has been largely studied since the 1920s, with research encompassing various fields, from history, anthropology, sociology, and education to communication and popular culture. Despite this dialect being subject to controversy and discrimination, many linguistic studies have demonstrated that AAVE is a structured linguistic system with established grammatical rules. However, no research has been conducted yet on how the dialect is represented in non-African American literature. In this regard, I chose to study three novels written at different periods by non-African American authors.

These novels—*Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) by Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Gone with the Wind* (1936) by Margaret Mitchell, and *The Help* (2009) by Kathryn Stockett—have been widely criticized for their negative portrayals of African Americans and their popularization of harmful stereotypes about black people. My goal is to study the evolution of the representation of AAVE by non-African American authors over time (from 1852 to 2009), and to determine to what extent the dialogues in these novels accurately reflect “real” AAVE at each period. To conduct this analysis, I will focus on five of the most common grammatical markers in AAVE—deletion of copula / auxiliary *be*, aspectual *be*, completive *done*, markers of negation, and *go*-based future markers. I hope to ascertain

whether the representation of the dialect in these novels is coherent with what is found in African American literature and in linguistic descriptions of the dialect.

AAVE; non-African American literature; copula be; aspectual be; completive done.

KIMBERLEY RIVIÈRE is an MA student at the University of Strasbourg graduating in linguistics. She found an interest in African American studies during her undergraduate studies and is now writing a thesis on the representation of the African American dialect by non-African American authors.

7. NICOLE FALLER (MA, FREIBURG) | From Jim to James: Code-Switching, Literacy Acquisition, and Self-Empowerment in Percival Everett's *James*

This presentation explores the protagonist's transformation from the belittled Jim to the empowered and self-determined James. Despite systemic oppression and abuse in the antebellum South, James emerges as an intelligent and dignified human being. His journey toward self-emancipation and identity formation is marked by two key milestones. First, the analysis foregrounds James' ability to code-switch between African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and standard English. Most importantly, his usage of AAVE does not necessarily reflect a linguistic stigma, but can be considered a central skill for navigating social hierarchies and proving his linguistic superiority to White individuals like Judge Thatcher. Seybold's review highlights how James becomes a "master of a closed discourse community," teaching his children to code-switch as a tool for survival. In order to explain how this practice is also subversive, it will be linked to concepts, such as Gates' "signifying" and Kelley's "infrapolitics."

Second, a great deal of attention is devoted to James' acquisition of literacy, which strengthens his intellectual development, hence dismantling racial stereotypes that depict enslaved people as cognitively inferior. Becoming literate enables James to question the beliefs presented by Enlightenment figures, such as Voltaire, Locke, Montesquieu, and Rousseau. By deconstructing their rhetoric, James exposes the racist ideologies embedded in Enlightenment ideas. As Giovannetti-Singh observes, the protagonist's interrogation of Western intellectual foundations reveals their hypocrisy (2), showing how he rises above dominant White discourses—a major step toward claiming his identity as an invigorated self.

Identity transformation; politics of vernacular speech; strategic survival; the power of reading; deconstruction of Enlightenment rhetoric.

NICOLE FALLER holds a BA in English and American Studies from Freiburg, including a year abroad at the University of Connecticut funded by the Baden-Württemberg Scholarship. Her BA thesis, awarded the top grade of 1.0, explored how moral decision-making processes qualify as acts of resistance to societal norms and values in realist novels like *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *The Portrait of a Lady*, and *The Grapes of Wrath*. Nicole Faller is currently pursuing an MA in British and North American Cultural Studies and has gained work experience as a research assistant for Prof. Dr. Sieglinde Lemke while teaching a tutorial for the lecture "introduction to cultural studies."

8. HAYKANUSH SAZHUMYAN (PHD, FREIBURG) | The Effects of Aspect on Meaning Interpretation in the Online and Offline Processing of Modal Constructions

Reading the sentence *The choir must sing live*, a reader can interpret it in two ways: *It is necessary that the choir sings live* or *The choir probably sings live*. Unless further context is provided, both interpretations are valid. This example illustrates the difference between *deontic* (i.e., objective) and *epistemic* (i.e., subjective) modal meanings. According to previous research (e.g., Frajzyngier et al. 2008; Anthonissen et al. 2016), changing the grammatical structure (i.e., *aspect*) of the verb phrase from simple to progressive in *The choir must be singing live* makes the epistemic interpretation more likely than the deontic one, as the subjective meaning of the progressive transfers onto the modal. This demonstrates that not only lexical items but also grammatical structures can convey a certain meaning, a viewpoint compatible with Construction Grammar (Croft & Cruse 2004: 257; Goldberg 2013: 17). This psycholinguistic study investigates the effects of aspect (i.e., progressive vs. simple) on the interpretation of English modals with a view to gaining insights into the mental representation of modal constructions. This overarching question is addressed through an innovative experimental design focusing on the necessity modals *must*, *should*, and *have to* and involving the analysis of both online and offline measures—specifically, reaction times in self-paced reading as well as decision times and forced choices for judgment questions. The results show that, while the progressive generally favors epistemic modality, the strength of this effect varies across different modals. From a constructionist perspective, this suggests that some modals are likely to have developed mid-level constructional schemas for certain grammatical forms (e.g., [SBJ *must* BE V_{ing}] epistemic), while others are likely to be processed via higher-level schemas (e.g., [SBJ V_{mod} BE V_{ing}] epistemic). The study illustrates that aspectual context is a crucial meaning-defining component within constructional networks and contributes to the formation of mid-level constructions for modals.

Psycholinguistics; construction grammar; modality; aspect; deontic vs. epistemic.

HAYKANUSH SAZHUMYAN is a PhD student at the University of Freiburg. She holds a BA in American, English, and German Studies from the University of Würzburg and an MA in English Language and Linguistics from the University of Freiburg. Her research interests revolve around psycholinguistics and corpus linguistics. In her PhD dissertation, she focuses on modality from a cross-linguistic perspective, drawing on theories from Construction Grammar.

9. STEFANIE HEEG (PHD, BASEL) | Space, Travel and Maps – Digitally Mapping Early Modern Travel Accounts

As part of the SNSF project *SwissBritNet*, my dissertation focuses on Anglo-Swiss travel accounts between 1580-1780. Having identified over 100 travel accounts thus far, I have created a data model to record, track, and map these journeys, all of which will be made accessible in our data base. This not only compiles the travel accounts into an accessible space, but also reveals transcultural networks, insights into the contents of the travel accounts, as well as the interactive maps visualizing the textual journeys.

In my paper, I will examine how maps and travel accounts can be critically read alongside one another. These two forms of representation share key similarities: both claim, problematically, to

depict the “truth” and that it is “objective”; both construct a version of reality rather than simply reflecting it; and both can be deconstructed as social constructions, discourses, and historical products. The authors of travel accounts and mapmakers alike inherently shape their work, and both maps and travel accounts are deeply entangled with power and colonialism. My project considers different kinds of maps: historical maps—either hand-drawn or printed—that accompany travel accounts; “cognitive maps” formed within the text; and, finally, digital maps that I, as a researcher, create based on these cognitive maps. Each of these serves distinct functions and carries specific consequences. This paper, which forms my first chapter, thus explores the possibilities, limitations, and implications of creating digital maps for early modern travel accounts.

Anglo-Swiss travel accounts; geocriticism; Digital Humanities; spatial representation; mapping.

STEFANIE HEEG is a PhD candidate at the University of Basel, working as a doctoral assistant on the SNSF project *SwissBritNet*. With an interdisciplinary approach that bridges history, literary studies, and digital humanities, she brings a unique perspective to her research. Stefanie holds an MA from the University of Basel and is writing her PhD on Anglo-Swiss travel accounts in the early modern period. Her work integrates digital tools to enhance the analysis and understanding of historical texts.

110 THOMAS MANSON (PHD, BASEL) | How to See the Country: Thomas Hardy, Tristram Hillier and the Space Between the “What Is and the What Might Be”

In Thomas Hardy’s novel *The Woodlanders* (1887), two characters are said to be uniquely able to read the “hieroglyphs” of the countryside. I take this moment as a basis in my dissertation for exploring a crisis of representation in Hardy’s writing which strains to find a language able to articulate an increasingly complex rural modernity. Imagining this complexity in the enigmatic figure of the hieroglyph evokes Hardy’s indebtedness to the visual arts. Hardy’s “visual” experiments comprise a chapter of my wider PhD project which reads Hardy’s work through Walter Benjamin’s notion of the *stillstand*: that frightening moment in which residual and emergent forces collide, potentially rerouting the onward march of capitalism. Hardy is ambivalent about the future, but his novels create unexpected spaces for utopian possibilities.

My title recalls Harry Batsford’s *How to See the Country* (1940), a popular guide to rural life aimed at a new class of socially mobile urbanites. Hardy’s work anticipates the rural modernism that would proliferate in this moment, particularly, I will suggest, in the paintings of Tristram Hillier. In their uncanny stillness, Hillier’s depictions of the Wessex landscape present a latent potentiality which encapsulates Benjamin’s *stillstand*. After a comparison with Hardy, I will discuss how the unresolved futurity of Hillier’s paintings was appropriated by the oil company Shell, whose adverts urged Batsford’s urban car-owners into the countryside (fuelled by Shell petrol). I then tie this back to the idea of the “hieroglyph,” which Benjamin observes as the kernel of the utopian potential of advertising.

Rural modernity; Thomas Hardy; landscape; hieroglyphs; Walter Benjamin.

THOMAS MANSON is a Research Assistant at the University of Basel. He is currently working on his PhD project, titled *Wessex at the 'stillstand': the vagrant spirit of Thomas Hardy*. He is also Co-Artistic Director of Riddlestick Theatre, a folk theatre company based in Bristol, UK.

11. HENRIKE KATTOLL (MA, FREIBURG) | The Cruel Boys in the Closet: Emotions, Imagination, and the Performance of Queer Identity

The Boys in the Band (1968)—both as a play and its movie adaptations—stands as a landmark in queer cultural history. By bringing the inner lives of gay men to the forefront, it challenged prevailing stereotypes and paved the way for future queer narratives in theater, film, and literature. Capturing the complex realities of pre-Stonewall gay life, the play reflects on the hardships and the community's defiant determination to exist openly despite widespread social hostility.

Using Sara Ahmed's theory of "affective economies," Lauren Berlant's "affective atmospheres," and the framework of "civic imagination," I examine how the 2020 film adaptation, set within the shifting sociohistorical landscapes of 1960s and 2020s New York, reveals the ways religious discourse and affective experiences—such as shame, anger, and joy—shape the construction of queer identity and masculinity. After establishing this theoretical and historical foundation, my analysis will delve into character interactions, assessing their internalized homophobia, queer identity negotiations, and personal understandings of masculinity.

Queer Studies; affect theory; New York City; identity; masculinity.

HENRIKE KATTOLL (she/her) is currently pursuing an MA in British and North American Cultural Studies at Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg. In her research, she explores points of interconnectedness between politics, history, and identity. Her research interests stretch from American Culture, especially the South and Midwest, to Victorian England with a focus on gender/queer studies, phenomenology, and poststructuralist theory.

12. FARIEL AMAROCHE (MA, MULHOUSE) | The Celebration of Women's Suffrage in the United Kingdom

In 1918, after years of effort, the British Parliament passed the Representation of the People Act. This law granted women over thirty the right to vote, a political voice, and the opportunity to advocate for additional legal rights. This success was the result of the hard work of the suffragists and the suffragettes. They both fought for women's rights in the United Kingdom but used different methods. One group was peaceful, and the other used more militant actions. A hundred years later, in 2018, the UK celebrated this achievement. People remembered the stories of women's fight for the vote and the important figures who made it possible. Many known and unknown suffragists and suffragettes were mentioned to honour their legacy. The centenary also made people reflect on gender issues that persist today, including equal pay and workplace harassment. Modern activists continue the fight for women's rights, using digital media to spread their message, influence laws and public opinion.

This paper examines how the UK marked 100 years since women got the vote. It studies newspaper articles, archives, and political speeches from 1918 and 2018 to understand the themes people discussed during the celebrations. The paper explains who the suffragists and suffragettes were and how they fought for women's right to vote. It also examines how people today perceive their work, connecting it to contemporary gender issues. We will explore how both women and men played roles in this change, and how their actions were interconnected.

Britain; women's suffrage; women's rights; Suffragettes; Suffragists; feminism.

FARIEL AMAROUCHE is an Algerian girl passionate about enhancing language teaching, particularly in spoken language. Although she couldn't pursue this field, she remains curious and enjoys exploring new topics and learning about unfamiliar subjects. A good example of this is that this year, she is working on civilisation, history, and politics. She also enjoys crafting handmade objects, riding her bike, and walking long distances. If she could be rich in anything, she would choose to be rich in time. Research requires attention to detail, precise measurements, and no room for mistakes. Hence, to achieve good results, more time is needed.

13. THIZIRI REGUIG (MA, MULHOUSE) | The Hands that Reach Out: New Realism in *Without Merit*

Young adult literature (YAL) evolved from early adventure stories and fairy tales to fantasy to a more authentic presentation of teenage life. This change, known as New Realism, emerged in the late 1960s and focuses on more authentic struggles and experiences of adolescents, tackling serious themes such as mental health, personal identity, trauma, and peer group issues. Thus, the new realist YAL offers readers a mirror to their own lives. Instead of providing an escape, these stories try to act as a guiding hand, and help teenagers navigate the complexities of adolescence by showing them they are not alone in their struggles.

In this presentation, I will examine the examples of *Without Merit* by Colleen Hoover and as text that may offer a therapeutic function to young adult readers. Can this novel, as an example of new realist YA literature, provide a space for teens to explore real-life challenges such as family dysfunction, mental health issues, and the importance of changing perspectives? Through its honest storytelling, this book might give teens a voice and allow them to see their own experiences reflected in the characters' journeys. But to what extent can literature truly offer comfort and insight into readers' lives?

Young Adult Literature (YAL); New Realism; mental health; family dysfunction; therapy.

THIZIRI REGUIG grew up in a society that deeply values poetry, art, and storytelling. This has shaped her love for music, theater, and writing, and strengthened her belief in the power of words to change the world. With an interest in psychology and a passion for teaching, she aims to inspire and create meaningful connections. Her academic journey includes researching the psychological development portrayed in young adult literature, and she is currently exploring new realism in young adult literature and its relevance to teenage struggles.

14. BABONE DIATTA (MA, MULHOUSE) | The Flaws of Feminism: #MeToo and Intersectionality in Roxane Gay's *Bad Feminist*

"I was called a feminist, and what I heard was, 'You are an angry, sex-hating, man-hating victim lady person.'" Roxane Gay declares in her introduction to *Bad Feminist*. This popular pop-culture supported image of feminism has led people to disavow feminism, especially when it fails to meet their expectations, as many people expect feminism to be perfect, and for feminists to behave according to strict, and often restrictive, codes. When feminism falls short, they say, "There is something wrong with Feminism" (Gay x). Of course, feminism—like any -ism—is flawed. Yet the problem is not only its imperfection but stems more significantly from its exclusion of marginalised groups, women of colour, working-class and trans women. This became apparent when, in 2017, the #MeToo movement raised a newly heightened awareness of the perverse nature of sexual violence and in turn instigated a lot of controversies, such as being labelled a movement only standing for celebrities, white and cisgender women. It was also said to have gone "too far" as it catalysed societal change.

In her provocative study *Bad Feminist*, Roxane Gay advocates for a different approach to feminism, standing against the selective type of feminism she describes as "mainstream feminism." Instead, she calls for a more representative and inclusive feminism. Deconstructing the former's negative ideas about feminism, she sheds new light on what being a feminist is. This talk will rely on Roxane Gay's concept of the "Bad Feminist" as an alternative to absolute feminism, arguing that we should not disavow the #MeToo movement because of its flaws. Instead, we should embrace the positive changes it has brought about. Moreover, this talk challenges the misconception that being a feminist is equivalent to hating men, or that the rise of women, i.e., women having more power in society, necessitates the downfall of men.

Feminism; Bad Feminist, #MeToo; absolute feminism; intersectionality.

BABONE DIATTA is an activist. He is the president of the Association of the Senegalese Students in Mulhouse and a member of the student union at the UHA. Beyond his activism, he is an amateur footballer with a passion for Arsenal FC and enjoys watching the English Premier League on weekends. As a student, he is interested in gender relations, especially male–female dynamics. Last year, he researched how sexual harassment and rape cases were addressed in the United States before and after the #MeToo movement. This year, he is focussing on the flaws of feminism and toxic masculinity, exploring potential solutions for a more inclusive and representative feminism.

15. LYNDIA MOULLA (MA, MULHOUSE) | The Undying Battle: Intersections of Race and Class in Claudia Rankine's *Citizen* and Richard Wright's *Uncle Tom's Children*

This paper examines the convergence of race and class in Claudia Rankine's *Citizen: An American Lyric* and Richard Wright's *Uncle Tom's Children*, exploring how the complex intertwined nature of these two factors establishes tiers of marginalization and prejudice. In their different historical and social contexts, Rankine's contemporary America and Wright's early 20th-century South, demonstrate how these two intersecting factors shape the experiences of Black individuals. In her work, Rankine discusses how Black individuals are frequently considered inferior regardless of their

class status, and even a Black person with a high level of education, who works in a professional, elite space, is still being reduced to his or her race. She explains how class status fails to protect Black Americans from the ongoing racial discrimination, and any advantage that comes with class standing can be taken away. In her poetic prose, Rankine makes clear how the interplay of race and class results in a particularly destructive form of trauma when even Black people who achieve social and economic success are still suffering emotionally and psychologically from navigating this racial discrimination across time.

Wright's stories, on the other hand, highlight how a system in which Black people experience double oppression is created as a result of racial violence and economic oppression that feed off one another in the Jim Crow South. His stories show that in addition to their racial oppression, the Black working class in the South is restricted by poverty, lack of educational possibilities, and a lack of social mobility. This means that racial oppression is enforced through being economically marginalized when possible means to escape poverty and improve circumstances are prevented. Disadvantaged Black individuals face both racial oppression and an economic system that maintain their inferiority, which turns oppression into a cyclical loop. My paper will analyze how these two elements, race and class, combine to influence the lived experiences of Black individuals in America by means of several examples. I will argue that they cannot be viewed in isolation from one another because of their persistent effect on Black lives across different time periods.

Claudia Rankine; Richard Wright; race; class; Black individuals; intersections; oppression.

LYNDA MOULLA began her academic career in Algeria with an MA in linguistics. In addition to a short, interesting experience in teaching English, she has also accomplished an ESP internship in Algeria focused on business English. Outside of academics, she enjoys reading, photography, learning new languages, and writing short stories. She is a passionate traveler who likes to discover natural landscapes and find inspiration in nature.

16. YANIS ANTOLINI (MA, STRASBOURG) | From Difficult Archive to Symbol of Resistance: A Study of the Role of the Southern Tree in Beyoncé's Afro-Feminist Utopia in *Lemonade*

"The past and the future merge to meet us here" are amongst the first words Beyoncé utters at the beginning of her 2016 visual album *Lemonade*. This paper does not confine the adverb *here* to it being a time marker in this statement and considers it for its primary meaning: it is a pointer of spatiality. *Here* means the Louisiana scenery in which the film was shot. *Here* means the Gulf coast, the plantation, the ruins of a Civil War fort, and the submerged streets of New Orleans.

The present study hence analyzes how these sites are dealt with by the Houston-born singer and looks at how the Southern landscape, and more particularly its trees, are presented in *Lemonade*, as the locus of a history marked by the endurance of racial violence, from the Atlantic slave trade to contemporary police brutality. With its affiliation to Jim Crow, the Southern tree invites us to look at its representation in 20th-century lynching photography, to listen to Billie Holiday and to read Baldwin and Morrison, in order to understand its significance in Beyoncé's attempt at fixing Black women's broken relationship with the US nation. By asking how *Lemonade* uses and reverses the tropes of lynching photography, I will attempt to showcase that the rehabilitation of the Southern

vegetation, in its affiliation with Black women's bodies, is one of the most potent marks of Beyoncé's rewriting of history from an Afro-feminist perspective.

Afro-feminism; visual activism; US landscapes; contemporary popular culture.

YANIS ANTOLINI is a second-year MA student in Anglophone studies at the University of Strasbourg. His curiosity for Beyoncé lies in her existence at the intersection of many of his interests which materialize into his research, such as popular music and culture, but also contemporary US literature and the notion of disputing national narratives.

17. VALERIE CAILLET (MA, FREIBURG) | Reimagining the Female Presidency in Contemporary Storytelling

In an era of rapidly evolving political landscapes and shifting societal norms, female presidents remain rare in real-world politics. Fiction often mirrors this imbalance, with portrayals of political leadership continuing to be dominated by male characters. However, contemporary storytelling increasingly imagines alternative models of leadership through depictions of female presidents. This paper examines how the female presidency is constructed in Greta Gerwig's movie *Barbie* (2023) and Naomi Alderman's novel *The Power* (2016). It explores traditional, gendered expectations of leadership and analyzes whether these are upheld, challenged, or reconfigured through contrasting portrayals of President Barbie (played by Issa Rae) and Tatiana Moskaev. While President Barbie represents a peaceful vision of female-led order—using satire and idealization to challenge the conventional masculinization of political power—*The Power* offers a dystopian counterpoint, portraying female authority as susceptible to violence and authoritarianism. Drawing on feminist media theory, feminist literary criticism, and intersectionality, this paper conducts a comparative media analysis to explore how these narratives both subvert and reinforce gendered assumptions about political power. Ultimately, it asks whether these narratives mark a shift in the cultural imagination of the presidency or merely replicate familiar tropes in a new guise.

Female presidents; gender; power; intersectionality; utopia; dystopia.

VALERIE CAILLET holds a BA in English and Political Science from the University of Heidelberg and is currently completing an MA in Education (English, Political Science, Latin) at the University of Freiburg. She gained academic experience during a research stay at the University of Edinburgh and currently works as a research assistant to J.-Prof. Dr. Maria Sulimma at the Chair of North American Studies in Freiburg. Her research interests include, among others, feminist theory, political fiction, and narrative representations of power.

18. ANNA NOWICKA (MA, FREIBURG) | AI-based Translation of Poetry – The Case of Polish-English Language Pair

The research conducted on AI-powered translation of poetry is sparse and lacks transparency. The present study acknowledges those limitations and examines this subject matter from various perspectives.

Firstly, it investigates the level of expertise demonstrated by Chat GPT-4 in rendering Polish poetry into English. It tests the applicability of the explanation-based translation method developed by Wang et al. (2024) and analyses the correlation between the quality of the provided explanation (prompt) and the content generated based on it. Moreover, it investigates the model's potential as a tool for machine-assisted translation.

A detailed analysis of the translated poems by Wisława Szymborska allows for an evaluation of GPT-4's ability to preserve rhyme, neologisms, modified idioms, wordplay, cultural references, tone, meaning, and form. The study provides valuable insights into the text generation process and the experience of working with the model. Additionally, it analyses the reception of the AI-generated texts by readers and addresses potential biases toward machine-created content.

The results indicate that while GPT-4 is not capable of autonomously producing adequate renderings, it demonstrates significant potential as a support for human translators, serving as an idea generator and a tool for improving both the process and quality of translation.

Machine translation; AI; bias; poetry; ChatGPT-4.

ANNA NOWICKA is a student of English Language and Linguistics at the University of Freiburg. Prior to pursuing her MA, she studied Applied Linguistics at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. Her research interests include Translation Studies, with a particular focus on the application of Large Language Models (LLMs) in this area. Recently, she has been working with the Semantic Web and ontologies in the pharmaceutical industry, aiming to further develop her expertise in this field.

19. KHADIDJA GUETTOUCHE (MA, MULHOUSE) | Bridging Languages: The Role of L1 in L2 Acquisition

The role of French (L1) in English (L2) instruction remains debatable in language pedagogy. While some advocate for an immersive English-only approach, others highlight the benefits of using L1 strategically to facilitate comprehension, scaffold learning, and boost student confidence. This talk explores how French can serve as a cognitive and pedagogical tool in the English classroom, helping learners build connections between linguistic structures, expand vocabulary, and develop metalinguistic awareness.

We will examine key theoretical perspectives, from Krashen's Input Hypothesis to Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, to understand how L1 can aid L2 acquisition. Additionally, we will discuss practical classroom strategies, such as code-switching for clarification, contrastive analysis for grammar instruction, and L1 use in pre-task planning to enhance speaking and writing skills. While over-reliance on French may hinder immersion, research suggests that judicious use of L1 can make English more accessible, particularly for beginners and intermediate learners.

Beyond theory, this talk will also consider broader implications for language teaching policies and teacher training: Should we rethink the "English-only" approach in classrooms? How can educators strike the right balance between L1 support and L2 exposure? By critically evaluating the role of French in English instruction, we can refine our teaching methods to create more effective and inclusive learning environments.

L1 use in L2 instruction; French in English classrooms; code-switching; TEFL methodology; metalinguistic awareness; bilingual teaching strategies; language teaching policy.

KHADIDJA GUETTOUCHE is an Algerian scholar currently pursuing an MA in art, civilisation and literature at the University of Haute Alsace. She also holds an MA in Linguistics, a field she is particularly passionate about. Her academic interests are deeply rooted in the intersections of language, culture, and communication. With over 7 years of teaching experience, she has worked across multiple educational settings as an ESP instructor at the university level, an EFL teacher in private institutions, and an English teacher in public schools. This diverse background has provided her with valuable insights into the field of TEFL and inspired her to actively engage with and address the challenges within it. Known for her super bubbly and outgoing personality, she brings warmth and energy into every environment she steps into. Outside of academia, she is an avid traveler and a devoted cat lover, always seeking new experiences and connections wherever she goes.

20. ABD ALAZIZ ALJURF (MA, STRASBOURG) | Emojis and Politeness Strategies: A Study in Pragmatics

Emojis have become integral to contemporary online communication, functioning as visual representations of emotions, actions, and objects. Beyond their pictorial nature, emojis act as linguistic elements, fulfilling pragmatic roles similar to words. This study explores how emojis are employed within asynchronous computer-mediated communication (CMC), aiming to establish a functional interpretive framework that incorporates their pragmatic functions and outlines the diverse ways emojis are used. It also examines their interaction with Brown and Levinson's (1978) politeness model, identifying necessary adaptations for online contexts.

The analysis draws on a large corpus of 20,000,000 Reddit comments containing emojis, collected in April 2023. Sub-corpora were created by extracting comments containing key politeness-related words (e.g., *please*), enabling focused examination of relevant emoji usage. A mixed-methods approach is used: qualitative statistical analyses identify emoji frequency and co-occurrence patterns, while discourse analysis explores the interplay between textual content and emojis.

This research highlights emojis as linguistic tools that reinforce, mitigate, or substitute politeness strategies, contributing to communication sciences and modern linguistics. By addressing how emojis evolve language within digital spaces, it provides insights into the semiotic relationship between text and visuals, reflecting the broader evolution of human communication in the digital age.

Pragmatics; politeness strategies; emojis; computer-mediated communication; discourse analysis.

Born in Aleppo, Syria, ABD ALAZIZ ALJURF is currently pursuing an MA in linguistics, with the hope of getting a PhD (somehow).

21. BOUALEM AMRAOUI (MA, MULHOUSE) | ESL Writing: Why Motivation is Just One Piece of the Story

Writing is not only about expressing thoughts, but also about developing them. It is a skill that takes time and effort to learn, especially when it involves English as a Second Language (ESL). Many ESL learners start with strong motivation, only to realize that motivation alone is not enough to improve their writing. Even those with strong motivation may struggle, because having motivation does not automatically provide the skills needed to write effectively. After all, words do not write themselves, and ideas do not just appear by themselves, unless the text is generated by computer software.

In this presentation, I will discuss why motivation is only one part of the ESL writing process. In particular, I will focus on three key aspects of ESL writing success: the importance of consistent practice, the importance of seeing writing as both a creative and academic activity, and understanding that good writing is about clarity, not just correctness. The main idea of my presentation is that while motivation is important, true progress comes from a mix of practice, effort, and focusing on more than just correctness in ESL writing.

ESL writing; motivation; consistent practice; creative effort; academic activity; clarity; correctness.

BOUALEM AMRAOUI is an MA student at UHA Mulhouse, specializing in Linguistics with a focus on Second Language Acquisition. He also holds a diploma as a Secondary School ESL teacher and has one year of teaching experience. He believes that people succeed or can be very successful when they pursue what they truly love, and hopes that his work will benefit others or at least open the door for further research. Outside of his studies, he enjoys night walks, exploring new places, sports, and learning about different languages and cultures. He appreciates the small, meaningful moments in life and believes that curiosity is the key to growth.

22. MARWA SELMI (MA, MULHOUSE) | In the Shadow of the Café: Exploring Misfitting and Belonging in Carson McCullers' *The Ballad of The Sad Café*

When pulled into Carson McCullers' Southern Gothic realm, one is as drawn to the grotesqueness of her characters as to her eerie spaces. Her novella *The Ballad of the Sad Café* (1951) presents a small Southern town populated with misfits. At the heart of the story is a café that transforms into a gathering space for these outcasts, only to later fall into decay.

This paper explores the transformation of the café as it shifts from a store to a place of leisure and eventually to a microcosm of the town's social dynamics. Drawing on Foucault's concept of heterotopias, the paper examines the café as a heterotopic space of deviation, where outsiders, marginalized individuals, and those who don't conform to societal norms gather. Central to this exploration are the figure of Miss Amelia, whose own gender ambiguity challenges traditional expectations, and Cousin Lymon, whose physical deformity marks him as another outsider. The café becomes an alternative home for the deviant, and eventually a space of conflict and rupture, echoing the essence of the non-conformist characters who inhabit it.

It's interesting to situate McCullers' café within a broader context of literary and visual representations of cafés, particularly through the lens of Baudelaire's Parisian cafés and Claude Monet's painting "La Grenouillère." This paper will trace the ways in which McCullers departs from these traditional notions, particularly in her portrayal of the café as not only a space of social interaction but also as a contested space that shifts in response to the evolving dynamics between its key figures, Miss Amelia, Cousin Lymon, and Marvin Macy. By situating McCullers' café within a Foucauldian framework, this paper explores its role as a heterotopic site that reconfigures notions of home, community, and exclusion.

Heterotopia; misfitting; grotesque; belonging; home.

MARWA SELMI is a second-year MA student in English Literature and Civilization at the University of Mulhouse. Her research focuses on alternative and grotesque spaces in the fiction of Carson McCullers, with particular attention to the idea of "home." Her work explores how misfitting bodies and unstable environments reshape the meaning of belonging in Southern Gothic narratives. Her broader research interests include spatial theory, body-centered narratives, and intermedial approaches to literature and art.

23. KODJO ANANIVI (MA, MULHOUSE) | Israelite vs. African American Slavery: Zora Neale Hurston's *Moses Man of the Mountain*

Slavery is a broad topic, encompassing many historical contexts such as in the early modern Ottoman Empire, the Islamic Middle East, Africa, the Americas, and Europe. In its analysis of Zora Neale Hurston's *Moses, Man of the Mountain*, my presentation focuses specifically on two cases that intersect in this tale: the enslavement of the Israelites in Egypt and the enslavement of African Americans in the New World. Hurston's allegory retells the tragic story of the Hebrews in Egypt from an African American perspective. My paper compares how the Israelites were enslaved in the Bible and how African Americans experienced slavery in the American South.

Building on this comparison, this project investigates the forces behind these oppressive systems and the mechanisms that uprooted these slaves from their homelands. Despite the oppressive conditions, enslaved individuals created their own cultural traditions, including sacred hymns, filed hollers, shouts, and work songs that they used to transcend their situation. Hurston portrays these elements in her novel. To deepen my presentation, I engage with W.E.B. Du Bois's spiritual theory, which coined the term "sorrow songs" as part of the fundamental lore that emerged from these enslaved communities.

Zora Neale Hurston; Moses;; Bible; African American slave culture; W.E.B. Du Bois.

KODJO ANANIVI is a community leader with a strong passion for literature and mentorship. He is an alumnus of the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI), cohort 42, in Accra, Ghana, where he specializes in public management. As a board member at the American Corner, University of Lomé, he showed his commitment to community service through a year of volunteering. In collaboration with other fellow members, he played a role in organizing the 2022 Cultural Diversity Festival and the 2023 Hip Hop Festival, both centered on promoting peace and opportunity. Currently, he is an

active member of Afef Mulhouse, a mentoring organization that supports students in their academic and personal development. He is very interested in spirituality, politics, debate, and performance. He specializes in American Literature, focusing on African American Folklore.

24. TAMARA DIMA IMBODEN (PHD, BASEL) | "I Am an Insider": Returning 'Home' in Shze-Hui Tjoa's *The Story Game*

In her 2024 'speculative memoir' *The Story Game* (see Naimon), Shze-Hui Tjoa describes her experience of visiting Bali with her family for the first time. Her father's Indonesian background gives young Tjoa complete confidence that she is "privy to a secret pattern worked deep into the grain of the island's history" (11). In *Cartographies of Diaspora*, Avtar Brah writes that "'home' is a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination" and can never be "returned" to (188). Yet Tjoa has grown up hearing stories and myths about the place, which, when she finally visits, she projects onto the island with a sense of authority. This paper explores the discursive patterns of this authority. It explores the narratives that inform her persona's mindset, investigating how her image of Bali comes not from a place of "authenticity," but from internalised narratives of "progress" and "development." Through this lens, the paper aims to show how the notion of authenticity needs to be problematised altogether, illuminating the precarious position held by second generation migrants as representing their cultural heritage despite the internalisation of continuing imperialist sentiments. This presentation constitutes part of my dissertation titled "Resignifying Space: Narrating Identity in Migration Fiction."

Home; authenticity; diaspora; migration; identity.

TAMARA IMBODEN is a doctoral assistant at the chair of North American and General Literature at the University of Basel, Switzerland. She completed her BA and MA studies at the University of Zurich, and conducted an exchange semester at the University of Vienna in Autumn 2021. Following the completion of her MA in summer 2022, Imboden has drawn together her interests in postcolonial theory, migration and literary spaces to investigate representations of cities in English literature, exploring the potential of spaces as narrative tools in a dissertation titled "Resignifying Space: Narrating Identity in Migration Fiction." Focusing on works such as Ayşegül Savaş's *The Anthropologists* (2024) and Dinaw Mengestu's *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears* (2007), the project connects questions of trauma, migration and the subaltern with those of spatial representation. As a research assistant, Imboden has taught a variety of BA courses on memory, postcolonial cities, as well as introductory courses in literary studies and literary theory. At the moment, she is teaching a BA Seminar titled "African-American Women Writers: From the Harlem Renaissance to Today."

25. WANEESA B. MACHADO (PHD, FREIBURG) | From English to Science: Expanding Performative Didactics Beyond Language

Pedagogical Drama, understood as the use of theatrical techniques as an active teaching and learning methodology, has gained increasing relevance in education, particularly in language

learning. This study is part of a doctoral thesis conducted in Brazil that investigates how theatrical pedagogy can be applied and perceived by pre-service teachers and educators in biological sciences.

As a case study, we analyze the workshop *Theater Makes School: Performative Didactics of Foreign Languages*, offered as part of the *Literature and English Certificate* program at the University of Freiburg. This course is primarily designed for undergraduate English education students and explores innovative teaching approaches that incorporate theatrical techniques into language learning. Through a survey, we examined the relationship between student motivation and different instructional methods, ranging from traditional to more interactive and performative approaches. Additionally, we conducted participant observations and analyzed students' final projects, in which they reflected on their engagement with theatrical pedagogy and its impact on their learning experience.

Building on some of the techniques explored in the workshop, we further adapted this methodology to the context of bioscience education, examining its potential for enhancing student engagement and interdisciplinary teaching practices. This study contributes to the discussion on performative didactics in education and highlights the possibilities of theatrical pedagogy beyond language learning, extending its application to scientific disciplines.

Teacher education; pedagogical theater; foreign language education; active teaching and learning; Science Teaching Methods.

WANEISSA B. MACHADO (University of Freiburg/Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro) is a Brazilian PhD candidate in Education, Management, and Communication in Bioscience. She is currently conducting a research stay at the Uni-Freiburg's English Department on Pedagogical Drama. At the Science, Art, and Education Lab in Brazil, she creates and performs theatrical and musical pieces on scientific themes and teaches Pedagogical Drama to bioscience students. She is also a video director at Fundação Cecierj (a public foundation dedicated to distance education and science communication) and a member of IDEA (International Drama/Theatre and Education Association).

26. NASSIM BOUZIANI (MA, MULHOUSE) | When Your Mind Goes Blank: How to Better Understand Speaking Anxiety in the Classroom

Speaking anxiety is seen as a personal struggle for many people learning a new language. In the context of English as Second Language (ESL), it has grown into a common challenge that impacts how well learners speak. Research has revealed that when they speak, many ESL learners experience discomfort, hesitation, and fear of making errors or being judged negatively by others. This prevents them from practicing the language effectively. ESL speaking anxiety may affect individuals differently, depending on their experiences and contexts, particularly in classroom settings.

In this presentation, I will first explore speaking as one of the main skills in ESL, followed by anxiety in general and the anxiety in speaking. This will lead me to compare three types of anxiety: (1) state anxiety, which is a short-term reaction to speaking tasks; (2) trait anxiety, which is a form

of constant nervousness; and (3) situation-specific anxiety, tied to the classroom setting itself. The goal is to show how these anxieties impact ESL learners' confidence and progress especially at UHA.

Anxiety; speaking anxiety; state anxiety; trait anxiety; situation-specific anxiety.

NASSIM BOUZIANI is passionate about cooking, especially baking French pastries. He has worked in a pastry shop to enjoy this hobby even more. He loves traveling to new places, often on fun, last-minute trips to see different cultures and big cities with beautiful buildings. When he is not exploring, he is usually near the sea, swimming and relaxing.

27. LAURA SELMA (MA, STRASBOURG) | Rhythm of Songs and English Stress Patterns

Rhythm is often considered as a universal property, and a wide variety of rhythms can be observed in different languages. This diversity does not hinder the perception of one's first language (L1) or the perception of music, as they both share numerous similarities (Brandt et al., 2012). However, the assimilation and the perception of a foreign language's rhythm can be more challenging, particularly in the context of learning English as a second language.

Therefore, this talk aims to address the potential benefits of pop songs and their rhythms in teaching English stress patterns. To explore this, a case study was conducted with undergraduate students from the English department at the University of Strasbourg. These voluntary participants attended a month-long online phonetics course on the Moodle platform, and performed various tests to evaluate their acquisition of stress patterns rules. The experimental group had songs integrated in their course, while the control group did not. This comparative approach aims to contribute to a discussion on the effectiveness, relevance, and applicability of using pop songs to exemplify English stress patterns.

Second Language Acquisition (SLA); musicology; phonetics; Applied Linguistics; psycholinguistics.

LAURA SELMA, who holds a postgraduate degree in educational sciences, completed her first thesis on the use of songs for teaching grammar. Currently pursuing a research MA in Anglophone studies, she continues her work in psycholinguistics, focusing on the role of music in teaching English rhythm.

28. LETIZIA IRIS FEDERICA AMBROSETTI (PHD, BASEL) | The Subject of Climate Change: Political, Poetic, and Psychological Dimensions in Contemporary Eco-Fiction

What is the role of literature in the confrontation with a possible apocalyptic future? What happens to the concept of the Subject in the context of climate crisis? The following are some of the questions to which my new dissertation project on eco-fiction aims to address, exploring the relationship between contemporary literature and climate crisis through a focus on the genre of eco-fiction. The presented dissertation will examine three different layers of this phenomenon, namely the environment, the body, and the mind, which may contribute to the understanding of a possibly renewed concept of the subject. The genre of eco-fiction addresses the crucial topic of climate crisis,

drawing on preoccupations of our era and engaging with readers on a personal level. In this research the significant relationship between the use of fictional techniques and individual engagement through affection and emotions is going to be highlighted, seeking to comprehend the extent to which fiction can assume a central role in transcending political apathy in the face of existential ecological threats. This presentation offers a preliminary overview of my dissertation, which bears the same title.

Eco-fiction; cli-fi; subjectivity; political engagement; catastrophe.

LETIZIA AMBROSETTI is a newly enrolled doctoral candidate at the University of Basel. She completed her BA in English and Philosophy at the same institution in autumn 2023, followed by her MA in Philosophy and Contemporary Critical Theory at the Center for Research in Modern European Philosophy (CRMEP) at Kingston University London, in the autumn of 2024. In April 2025 she officially started her PhD at the University of Basel with the objective of exploring the connection between literature, politics, and philosophy in a dissertation called “The Subject of Climate Change: Political, Poetic, and Psychological Dimensions in Contemporary Eco-Fiction.” The project’s primary focus is on the manner in which the affective reception of literary works, particularly those of the eco-fiction genre, shapes the lessons we learn for navigating our lives and addressing the environmental challenges facing both us and the non-human world.

29. TRISTAN RATIEUVILLE (MA, STRASBOURG) | Vegetal “Language” in Richard Powers’ *The Overstory*: A Literary Experiment of Translation and Communication

Human beings have endeavoured to understand the language of other-than-human entities for centuries, interested in the understanding of animal or vegetal communication for example. If scientists’ quest for finding meaning in the natural world has led to the revelation of trees exchanging information through a language which biology does not fully get, this presentation will explore the linguistic experience and creation of Richard Powers in *The Overstory*. Published in 2018, this American eco-novel depicts nine protagonists brought together by trees in a world pervaded by the destruction of forests.

My research focuses on the vegetal model which shapes this work, my MA dissertation studying the way the model of the tree is central to the construction—or should I say the growing—of the narrative, the characters, the structure and the language. My presentation here focuses on this last notion which is vegetal communication. Is it possible to speak of language in the case of trees? If yes, how can fiction translate such a mysterious form of communication that even science struggles to define? I aim at analysing Powers’ experiment through the angles of literature and linguistics: with Émile Benveniste as a reference, I want to show how this fictional and vegetal semiotic system works and the effects it may have on the reader. The question of a possible translation from plant to human language is central to my work as well as the paradoxical richness of the untranslatable.

Contemporary American literature; eco-literature; ecocriticism; vegetal language; translation.

TRISTAN RATIEUVILLE is a second-year MA student in anglophone studies, majoring in literature. As he wanted to work in a contemporary field to find concrete meaning in his research, his deep interest

in nature has led him to the study of ecoliterature and the way the vegetal realm is represented and portrayed in contemporary art. He discovered *The Overstory* by chance, and now everything is greener.

30. JUNI KVARVING (PHD, KENT) | Solving Climate Crisis: Crime and Complicity in *Hummingbird Salamander* by Jeff VanderMeer

The narrative of “solving” climate crisis has become a vehicle for a more covert type of climate denial which seeks to admonish us from a feeling of complicity. The narrativization of climate crisis as a crime that needs to be solved preserves the illusion that we are either waiting for a technological advancement or need to hold the largest polluters responsible to solve the crisis. The primary problem and solution to climate emergency has been clear since anthropogenic climate change was first detected; there is too much carbon retained in the atmosphere and we must decarbonize. Despite this, the detective narrative has an allure in climate discourse and literature because it simplifies the wicked problem of how to decarbonize by presenting us with a familiar narrative structure which promises to place responsibility with a perpetrator. The detective story, in the context of climate change, functions as a “new normal” narrative; a narrative which pacifies the strangeness of climate and societal tipping points to, for better or worse, protect our current reality from disruption. Jeff VanderMeer’s novel *Hummingbird Salamander* introduces a crime scene and takes the reader on a hunt for the perpetrator. The mystery of VanderMeer’s novel functions as an enticing escape from climate crisis, however, the detective narrative inevitably gives way to the climate destruction. *Hummingbird Salamander*, I will argue, cautions its readers against absolving themselves from complicity by imagining climate crisis as a crime scene instead of taking action to ensure that climate destruction never occurs in the first place.

Climate crisis; crime fiction; complicity; the new normal.

JUNI KVARVING is a PhD researcher at the University of Kent writing about the narrative aesthetics of climate emergency and tipping points in contemporary American utopian novels post-2008. Alongside her studies, she has undertaken a placement at *Wasafiri Magazine for International Contemporary Writing* funded by the Consortium for the Humanities and the Arts South-East England (CHASE), edited for *Holland House Books*, and taught as an Assistant Lecturer at the University of Kent and Course Instructor at the Council of International Educational Exchange in London. Her other research interests include post-colonial theory, genre theory, Marxism, feminism, global literature, and utopianism. Juni is also co-director of the New Voices in Postcolonial Studies Network, co-editor of *New Voices in Postcolonial Studies Magazine*, and is organizing a conference on the theme of the “American Dream/American Nightmare” in July 2025 at the University of Westminster. Her most recent publication is an article titled “VanderMeer’s eco-weird doubles: (Post)human transformation and the tipping point” and can be found in vol. 43 of the *European Journal of American Culture*.

31. CHARLOTTE LAMONTAGNE (PHD, STRASBOURG) | Self-Reflexivity and the Audiobook Medium – The Case of Nabokov's *Pale Fire*

This paper examines the impact of audiobook remediation on the self-reflexive nature of literary texts, focusing on Vladimir Nabokov's 1962 novel *Pale Fire*. Being a highly metafictional work of literature, *Pale Fire* relies on the interplay between John Shade's poem and Charles Kinbote's commentary. Both are fictional and require the reader to actively navigate the novel's complex structure, through a system of numbered hypertextual endnotes which pave the reader's way throughout their reading experience. The shift from print to audiobook imposes a linear mode of consumption that changes this dynamic, potentially constraining the reader's interpretative agency. This study considers whether the novel's self-reflexivity, which is deeply rooted in its visual presentation, is diminished or transformed in its auditory remediation.

The effect of audiobook narration on the novel's unreliable narratorial voice, particularly that of Kinbote, is a central issue which this paper will try to explore. The audiobook medium and its performance choices (like tone, pacing, inflection), which deeply influence the reception of the novel, and modify its tone, are also at the heart of our reflection since we will be listening to excerpts from the audiobook of *Pale Fire*.

Nabokov's work deliberately foregrounds the artificiality of fiction, inviting active engagement with its textual construction. However, audiobooks, by eliminating visual cues and enforcing a continuous reading experience, challenge traditional notions of interactivity and interpretation. This study ultimately interrogates whether complex literary texts can retain their full interpretative depth as audiobooks, or whether the remediation compromises their structural and thematic intricacies.

Vladimir Nabokov; remediation; audiobooks; listening; self-reflexivity.

CHARLOTTE LAMONTAGNE is a first year PhD student at the Université Paris Cité, supervised by Monica Manolescu and Abigail Lang, whose doctoral thesis, "Listening to Nabokov: novels, audiobooks, and public readings," aims at exploring the way in which the audiobook medium and orality impacts originally written works of fiction. She has been working on sound studies and the audiobook medium since her first year of MA. In her MA theses, she compared canonical literary works of fiction with their audiobook equivalent, looking at the impact of the remediation into audiobooks. In 2022, she received the Dieter E. Zimmer prize for best postgraduate work on Vladimir Nabokov for her MA thesis "Listening to *Lolita*."

32. VALENTINA LASSO MELENJE (MA, MULHOUSE) | Beyond Spanglish: Latino Representation Through Language in *Modern Family*

Language in media is more than just communication; it shapes how cultures and communities are represented. *Modern Family*, one of the most influential sitcoms of the 21st century in the United States, presents a diverse cast of characters, including Gloria Pritchett, a Colombian immigrant whose bilingual speech is central to her portrayal. Her frequent code-switchings, often played for humor, raise important questions about how Latino bilingualism is framed in mainstream media.

Thus, while *Modern Family* brought Latino representation to wide audiences, its linguistic choices have opened debate.

By exploring specific examples from the show, this talk examines specific patterns in Gloria's code-switching and their role within the show's narrative. I am mainly interested in analyzing the following question: Does her bilingualism reflect the real-life experience of the Latino speaker, or does it reinforce stereotypes? In order to do this, I will explore how *Modern Family* uses code-switching not just as a linguistic feature, but also as a tool for character development and audience engagement. Additionally, I will examine how Gloria's bilingualism is tied to comedic timing, emotional expression, and moments of cultural reinforcement, questioning if *Modern Family* challenges or supports typical storylines associated with Latino representation in mainstream television.

Code-switching; bilingualism; Modern Family; Latino representation; stereotypes.

VALENTINA LASSO MELENJE loves theater, music, and dance, especially Latin rhythms that connect her to her roots. She enjoys traveling, meeting new people, and learning about different cultures. She also loves animals, especially when it comes to horses, since she worked with them in the past. Growing up in a family of strong women, she values resilience and independence. She is passionate about languages, even though French still gives her a hard time.

33. IRINA BARBET (MA, STRASBOURG) | Musical Performances in Roald Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and their Adaptations on Screen

Both Mel Stuart's *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory* (1971) and Tim Burton's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (2005) are film adaptations of Roald Dahl's children's novel *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (1964). In all three versions, misbehaving children are punished and their faults are denounced in songs interpreted by the Oompa Loompas, Willy Wonka's factory workers.

My research project explores the adaptation of these musical numbers from novel to screen: I study the lyrics of the songs in the three works and analyse the visual, musical, and aesthetic aspects of the performances. The use of the Loompa Loompas as "voices of morality" is discussed, as well as the way they impart moral values to readers and viewers. I also wonder about the use of violence and horror as didactic tools.

For this study, I rely mainly on Sarah Cardwell's understanding of the purpose of the comparative approach in the field of adaptation studies: "Through comparison of texts in different media, we can move to a comparison of the media themselves, which can lead us to a fuller and more complex understanding of the specificity of the media involved." I intend to show how the interpretative choices made by the two directors inflect the meaning and reception of Dahl's songs. More specifically, my work will show that morality becomes a minor concern in Tim Burton's postmodern film, in which images are more important than messages.

Didacticism; adaptation studies; musical performances; children's literature.

IRINA BARBET is an MA student at the University of Strasbourg graduating in English and majoring in Literature. She is interested in the adaptation of literary works on screen.

34. EMMA NEY (MA, STRASBOURG) | Scales and Braids: The Dragon-Woman in the Cycle of *Earthsea* by Ursula K. Le Guin

The eighteen-year pause Le Guin marked between the publication of books three and four of the Cycle of *Earthsea* marked more than a temporal fracture: in the light of her changes of narrative choices, such as the abandonment of the previous hero or the emphasis on feminine points of view, scholars were led to study the genre and discourse shifts observable within the saga. However, a notable addition to the second trilogy are dragon-women, who have not been previously considered as part of the said shift. Previous studies about *Earthsea*'s dragon-women have brought forward the role her dragon nature plays as an empowering alter-ego. However, with the notion of power comes a pyramidal structure which Le Guin departs from by moving from epic to novel literature. In my work I question such paradoxes, focusing on the changes brought to women and dragons in order to reintroduce them as a merged figure in the second trilogy, the critiques surrounding dragon-women's hybridity and their status as a frontier character, caught between metaphor and tangibility.

Fantasy; anti-dominance; ecofeminism; Taoism.

After two years of art school at the Beaux Arts of Metz, during which EMMA NEY worked on imaginary creatures and their visual impact, the focus of her research now lies on the topical issues reflected in fantasy, mainly concerning the representation of women and the use of mythical figures.

35. THERESA J. MARX (MA, FREIBURG) | Hybrid Futures: Undoing Gender and Species Binaries in Haraway's "The Camille Stories" and Lemire's *Sweet Tooth*

The urgency to move beyond apocalyptic thinking in response to climate catastrophe and growing social injustice has given rise to critical literary explorations of speculative futures as restorative narratives. Young adult fiction, in particular, serves as a potent medium to simultaneously advocate social and environmental justice by centering the perspectives of adolescent protagonists—curious and impressionable figures who critically investigate harmful cultural norms, such as rigid social hierarchies and human exceptionalism in ecological contexts.

Building on critical ecofeminist theories by Greta Gaard, Judith Butler, and Ursula K. Le Guin, this presentation illustrates how Donna Haraway's fabulation "The Camille Stories" (2016) and Jeff Lemire's graphic novel series *Sweet Tooth* (2009–2013) employ formal and discursive strategies to dismantle binary logics of gender and species. Both narratives revolve around hybrid child protagonists who physically transcend species boundaries, and thereby mirror the post-dualistic gender identities they construct internally. Findings reveal that formal elements, such as panel composition and sequencing in the visual text deliberately guide the readers' gaze to elicit sympathy for non-human individuals, while the omission of specifying language in the literary text compels them to look inward and interrogate their own prejudices. Both authors discursively question the

necessity of rigid categories by uncoupling hegemonic norms from social expectations in post humanist settings and imbuing their non-human protagonists with a self-determined sense of identity. Ultimately, Lemire and Haraway emphasize similarity, community, and interconnection while gradually normalizing an understanding of gender and species as porous and malleable categories in their speculative fiction.

Hybridity; gender performativity; multispecies entanglement; YA literature; future fiction.

THERESA J. MARX (she/her) is a research associate, doctoral candidate, and lecturer in North American Cultural Studies at the University of Freiburg. She completed her MA in British and North American Cultural Studies and received the Stephen Crane Award for her thesis titled ““The Story of Home”: Memory, Decolonization, and the Afrofuturistic Vision in Ryan Coogler’s *Black Panther* and *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever*.” Marx holds a BA in French and English and has studied at the University of Freiburg and Grinnell College, IA. Currently, her research interests include Critical Futurisms, African American and Diaspora Studies, Visual Culture, and Environmental Humanities.

36. CHARLINE RUBRECHT (MA, MULHOUSE) | The Utopian Ending in Tahereh Mafi’s Dystopian Novel *Shatter Me* (2011)

The Utopia of Sir Thomas More (1516) is said to be the first and most well-known story about a utopia: a remote place, often an island, where people are free and happy. The resources in such a place are abundant and equally shared and everyone lives a long and healthy life. On the contrary, the dystopian novel *Shatter Me* (2011) by Tahereh Mafi, depicts a society that is far from ideal: an oppressive and overpowerful world-wide government, ruling over starving and sick people in a world damaged by climate change. Omega Point’s rebel group fights against this authoritarian regime called The Reestablishment.

Omega Point was created long before the fall of the world’s governments by Castle, who foreshadowed the rise of The Reestablishment. Omega Point is characterized by its ‘secret’ aspect for it is an underground infrastructure, as much as being a safe place for its 200 inhabitants, who equally share food, clothes, and medicine. Ultimately, the main characters of the story successfully join Omega Point in an attempt to save their lives.

This talk will examine the ending of *Shatter Me* in light of Thomas More’s *Utopia* and determine how much of it is actually utopian.

Utopia; dystopia; government; oppression; rebellion.

CHARLINE RUBRECHT is 26 years old and an MA student. She wrote her BA project on utopia and dystopia, on both genres’ history, and as much as how they evolved over time. For her MA thesis, she is writing about speculative fiction with Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale* (1985) and young adult literature with Tahereh Mafi’s *Shatter Me* series (2011).