

# BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

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“Research Across Genres, Modes and Media”



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## Attending to the Meaningful 'Whole': Research from a Multimodal Perspective

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### Abstract

Multimodality is an emergent field of research that shifts from the traditional assumption that ways of communication considered as 'verbal' or 'visual' are to be studied separately. Multimodality takes the notion of 'text' as a combination of ways (*modes*) of communication that work — and are put to work — differently according to the context of situation and the 'materiality' (the *medium*) used.

In this presentation, I will approach this new field of study by trying to answer a number of questions: what is understood by multimodality? And what is a *mode*? Where does multimodality come from? What are the main theoretical concepts? Is there a single framework or 'toolkit' to be applied? What are the benefits — and the drawbacks — of *doing* multimodality? Can we just *adopt* multimodal research tools?

Addressing these questions will show the major challenges faced by researchers in multimodality. I will argue that the pervasiveness of multiple modes acting in combination in our contemporary communicational landscape calls for a fresh look at texts as 'meaningful wholes'. To understand 'texts' (printed or digital), we need to understand multimodality.

## Heightened Genre and Cine-fille Filmmaking in Contemporary Hollywood

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### Abstract

This paper derives from a research project concerned with how women's mainstream filmmaking across a range of Hollywood genres has since the late 1980s challenged a number of existing paradigms of film engagement, feminist and beyond. After outlining the broad parameters of the research – which also takes in films by Amy Heckerling, Sofia Coppola, Nora Ephron, Nancy Meyers, Catherine Hardwicke, Kimberly Peirce and Greta Gerwig – it will take the case study of Kathryn Bigelow's *Detroit* (2017) to illustrate some of its concerns. Specifically, the paper will draw on affect theory to argue that *Detroit* demonstrates the way in which socially constructed, individually experienced emotions engender material realities, at the levels of both content and form. In the first place, the film depicts graphically how violence is a consequence of (groundless) collective fear, by focusing on the true story of the murder of several African Americans in 1967 after one of them angrily shoots a toy gun that is mistaken for a real one. In the second, it relies heavily for its emotive power on a self-conscious engagement with various genres – in particular the war film and the sacrificial trauma film (King 2011) – and specific films, including from Bigelow's own oeuvre. This approach invites a cerebrally engaged mode of spectatorship, yet one that is also viscerally affecting: in its impetus not only to claim but also to demonstrate how even the most collectively significant actions and events are rooted in personal experiences, feelings and mental states, the film works on individual, embodied viewers through collective structures of feeling negotiated by over-determined genre films. Thus echoing Steve Shaviro's well-known analysis of *Blue Steel* (1990) to illustrate how "Bigelow affirms and celebrates visceral immediacy as an effect of simulation" (1993, my emphasis) through heightened genericity, this reading also gives the lie to old models of film theory that have sought to separate the (gendered) domains of thought and sentiment. In so doing it posits a 'cine-fille' female film author instantiated by a mode of address that is formally feminist and queer.

### References:

- King, Claire S. 2011. *Washed in Blood: Male Sacrifice, Trauma, and the Cinema*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.
- Shaviro, Steven. 1993. *The Cinematic Body*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

### Filmography:

- Bigelow, Kathryn. 1990. *Blue Steel*. USA.
- Bigelow, Kathryn. 2017. *Detroit*. USA.

## The Place of Video Abstracts in Science Communication: Exploring the Rationale behind a New Genre

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### Abstract [paper]

The advent of digital platforms, channels and resources has shaped interaction in countless fields, including the academic sphere. Scientific communication, leveraging the affordances of the digital medium, has taken new forms to meet contemporary social demands, reach new types of publics and adapt to changing conditions in terms of actions, procedures and values in each particular discipline (Luzón and Pérez-Llantada 2019). This is reflected in innovative genres which have resulted from the evolution of traditional genres in the online environment or from the emergence of practices, artifacts and compositions that are native to the web. In this context, video abstracts are brief audiovisual compositions that convey the main ideas of a research article (RA). The present study has been conducted within the broader framework of a mixed-methods research into the function and characteristics of video abstracts. The research addresses the place and role of video abstracts in the ecology of academic genres. This paper specifically seeks to analyse how scientific information from RAs is recontextualised in video abstracts and for what purposes, exploring how this genre is complementary to other related genres (e.g. RA, traditional abstract). This will be done through the combination of rhetorical analysis from the perspective of digital genre with ethnographically-oriented methods. In line with previous research, the study suggests that video abstracts could be considered as an optional add-on genre (Luzón and Pérez-Llantada 2019) that provides authors with a wide range of new possibilities derived from its digital, multimodal nature.

### References:

Luzón, María José and Carmen Pérez-Llantada. 2019. "Connecting Traditional and New genres: Trends and Emerging Themes". In Luzón, María José and Carmen Pérez-Llantada (eds.) *Science Communication on the Internet: Old Genres Meet New Genres*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins: 1-18.

**Keywords:** academic discourse; digital genres; ethnography; video abstract

## Moving Frames: Globalization and the Politics of Space in the Cinema of Roman Polanski

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### Abstract [paper]

This presentation sets out to offer an overview of an ongoing research project on the cinema of French-Polish filmmaker Roman Polanski. The central aim of said project is to explore the various ways in which Polanski's cinema, specifically in his so-called 'post-Hollywood' period, has confronted and mediated the changes and challenges brought about by the onset on globalization both to the social and the cinematic, focusing on questions of ideology, culture, representation and aesthetics. Considering the decidedly geographical dimension of the phenomenon, the specificities of the cinematic form and language, and Polanski's own thematic and stylistic mannerisms, one particular concept has been chosen as the project's main guiding thread and tool of analysis, namely that of space. In order to justify such an approach, this presentation will begin by briefly touching upon what is now known as the 'spatial turn' in the humanities and which has seen space become what Mieke Bal defined some two decades ago as a "travelling concept" (2002), that is, a vehicle for the interdisciplinary exchange of ideas, theories and methods for the analysis of culture. Part of the 'spatial' literature put to use in this research will then be considered, including works on sociology and critical theory (Lefebvre 1991) geography (Soja 1989) and cultural and film theory (Heath 1981; Jameson 1995). Polanski is next, as a case will be made for him as subject of such an analysis, focusing on both his dimension as a transnational filmmaker and his well-known penchant for the creative exploration of cinematic space. An outline and justification of the corpus of films selected and the structuring of the whole project as well as an overview of some of the results and conclusions obtained so far will conclude this presentation.

### References:

- Bal, Mieke. 2002. *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Heath, Stephen. 1981. *Questions of Cinema*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Jameson, Fredric. 1995. *The Geopolitical Aesthetic: Cinema and Space in the World System*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Lefebvre, Henri. 1991. *The Production of Space*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Soja, Edward. 1989. *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*. New York: Verso.

**Keywords:** Roman Polanski; film studies; globalization; space; transnationalism

## Captured by Time: The Ageing Transformation of Byron Embodied by His Characters

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### Abstract [paper]

Byron is seen nowadays as the ultimate Romantic, whose name is associated with a man of heated passion (McGann 2000: 3). The rebellious author voices the concerns of men who do not want to hide from their wrinkles or not-so-perfect bodies, which Lord Byron courageously explores in his works. In his early works, Byron speaks of rebellion and of a strong opposition to everything that a liberated soul does not agree with. In his later works, burdened with his gained experience and wisdom, Byron strongly promotes the idea of escapism, both physical and mental, strengthening the effect of his writings by personal example of forsaking his beloved England.

The specific theoretical framework of this thesis is literary gerontology, with a special focus on transformations of a personality through the life course with reference to the idea of dying, losing physical attraction or avoiding the merciless velocity of time. Drawing on the works of Anne Wyatt-Brown (1990) and Ulla Kriebeneegg (2014), ageing is one of those “voices” in which writers and characters speak; this step bridges the gap between literary studies and gerontology, thus permitting us to see ageing from the new perspective. This paper is aimed at shedding more light on this topic and filling all the gaps. It intends to demonstrate that Lord Byron’s works are as necessary now as they were at the period of the second generation of Romantic writers in England. In order to do so, I will offer a close examination of Lord Byron’s poems and literary characters with hope to show how the poet’s writings reveal the significant moments of growing old in an industrialised, prejudiced and limited society and what solutions one may come up with to survive and, furthermore, to successfully age in those conditions.

### References:

- Kriebeneegg, Ulla, Roberta Maierhofer and Barbara Ratzenböck. 2014. “Re-thinking Material Realities and Cultural Representations of Age and Aging.” In Kriebeneegg, Ulla, Roberta Maierhofer and Barbara Ratzenböck (eds). *Alive and Kicking at All Ages: Cultural Constructions of Health and Life Course Identity*. Bielefeld: Transcript. 9-21.
- McGann, Jerome. 2000. *Lord Byron - The Major Works*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wyatt-Brown, M. Anne. 1990. “The Coming of Age of Literary Gerontology”. *Journal of Aging Studies* 4: 299-315.

**Keywords:** Byron, escapism, Romantic, age, literary gerontology

## ESP Course Design Using Needs Analysis

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### Abstract [paper]

Over the last few decades, English has turned out to be the most frequently used language in different specialised working areas. This is the reason why the study of the distinctive features of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has become a successful research field (Fuertes Olivera and Samaniego Fernández 2005). To fulfil the needs of the labour market, universities are currently offering courses on ESP in their different degrees. On account of this, my ongoing thesis will present a new interactive methodology based on the use of active subtitling and new technologies in an attempt to enhance the students' knowledge. As Nunan (2004) points out, it is necessary to develop learning programs to expose the specific communicative needs that some learners may have. This is why, before putting a methodology into practice, it is important to design and carry out a needs analysis that evaluates what students know about subtitles and new technologies and how they can use them effectively and productively.

Needs analysis is described as a “pre-course design process in which information is gathered to help the teacher [...] decide what the course should focus on [...] and what teaching/learning methods to employ” (Basturkmen 2010: 26). Thus, this paper introduces the needs analysis I expect to use in my PhD thesis. The platform Survivo has been used to make it more appealing to the students. This is an interactive platform that enables students to have access from any electronic device. The questionnaire has been designed taking into account possible scenarios related not only to the students English skills but also to their ICTs knowledge, as well as, their previous contact with subtitling as a learning resource. The results are expected to help with the design of specific teaching units that are meant to be implemented next year at the University of Zaragoza as part of my thesis.

### References:

- Basturkmen, Helen. 2010. *Developing Courses in English for Specific Purposes*. New Zealand: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Fuertes-Olivera, Pedro Antonio and Eva Samaniego Fernández. 2005. “El inglés para fines específicos: rasgos distintivos”. In Fuertes-Olivera, Pedro Antonio (ed.) *Lengua y sociedad: investigaciones recientes en lingüística aplicada*. Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid: 247-271.
- Nunan, David. 2004. *Task-Based Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**Keywords:** ESP; subtitling; ICTs; needs analysis; Survivo

# The Representation of Dalit Community in Bama's *Karukku* (2014) and Baburao Bagul's *When I Hid My Caste* (2018): A Multilayered Counterpoint

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## Abstract [paper]

Indian society has been enduring for centuries the rules and consequences of a despotic caste system whose ultimate victim is the Dalit community, formerly known as 'untouchables'. What sprouted from Dalits' oppression and suffering are thought-provoking literary productions in which politics, sociology and religion intertwine and which, precisely because of their content and form, were disregarded due to the hegemonic nature of caste in the Indian literary field. After India's independence, the formation of a Dalit political category and identity coincided with the rising popularity of Dalit literature as a new field of study. With a completely different layout from Indian mainstream texts, Dalit literature describes individual and collective pain, trauma and oppression and integrates the political and sociological specificity of Dalits' experience.

This paper aims at examining Dalits' representation in two illustrative works of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Dalit literature, namely Bama's *Karukku* (2014) and Baburao Bagul's *When I hid my caste* (2018) as they both belong to a generation of Dalit forerunners who dared to speak and represent their community although they captured moods of different times and spaces. Thus, the analysis will be carried out taking into account the genre (autobiography vs. fictional work), the female/male standpoint of the writers, the pre and post independence scenario, and the Hindu/Christian perspective on the Dalit predicament. Some of the aspects to be examined are the representation of the casteist oppression and multilayered discrimination concomitant with it, Dalits' cyclical oppression and its traumatic effects, the stigma of untouchability, the viability of (religious) escapism and the spectral nature of change assuming that the caste system and the practice of untouchability have been legally abolished with the 1950 Constitution. Additionally, the paper will also tackle stylistic features such as choice of genre, focalisation, time/space schemes, construction and de-construction of the plot and, most importantly, the language and topics displayed in Dalit literature.

In order to perform an extensive analysis, some of the most outstanding critics in the field of postcolonial theory—such as Homi K. Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak, among others—as well as trauma theory—under the dialectics of scholars such as Cathy Caruth—will serve as a basis so as to establish the terms, extent and appropriateness of trauma in this particular case.

## References:

- Bagul, Baburao. 2018. *When I Hid my Caste*. Trans. by Jerry Pinto. New Delhi: Speaking Tiger Books.
- Bama. 2014. *Karukku*. Trans. L. Holmström. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Bhabha, Homi. K. 1994. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.
- Caruth, Cathy. 1995. *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. London: Johns Hopkins UP.
- Spivak, Gayatri. C. 1988. "Can the Subaltern Speak?". In Nelson, Cary and Lawrence Grossberg (eds.) *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

**Keywords:** postcolonial studies; insidious trauma; Dalit Indian literature; caste/class/gender conflict; contemporary untouchability

## Femininity and Hinduism in Bharati Mukherjee's *Darkness*: A Postcolonial Approach

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### Abstract [paper]

This paper aims at analysing the concept of femininity within the context of Hinduism in Bharati Mukherjee's short story novel *Darkness* (1985) by using a post-colonial approach. In particular, this paper will analyse the conflation of all of the cultural and social aspects as experienced by Indian immigrants in the United States. This analysis will be divided into two sections: the first part will offer an analysis of dharma, which is a Hindu concept related to duty, as well as social relationships within the Indian family regarding women (Sugirtharajah 2002: 100; Knott 1998: 112). The second part will delve into Gayatri Spivak's theoretical concept of the Other (1988) to the study of women in these short stories.

Thus, this paper intends to picture the relevance of hierarchical structures relating to religion and women's position as the basis of study attempting to figure out how Bharati Mukherjee's characters behave and assert themselves as immigrants in a foreign land, taking into account the hierarchical society and the cultural background they come from. In India, "gender issues are not simply social matters demanding a secular response; they are underpinned by religious ideas and maintained by ritual customs" (Knott 1998: 81).

To conclude, this paper will prove that Indian women, coming from a rigid and hierarchical society where women are submissive, are assimilated in the foreign country adopting westernized behaviours and asserting their rights, hence Mukherjee "is especially concerned with foregrounding the positive side of immigration" (González and Oliva 2015: 76). Bharati Mukherjee's short stories focus on assimilated characters instead of expatriates. Mukherjee, thus "fabulizes America, Hinduizes assimilation [...]" (Drake 1999: 61).

### References:

- Drake, Jennifer. 1999. "Bharati Mukherjee Immigrant Narratives". *Contemporary Literature* 40 (1): 60-84.
- González, M<sup>a</sup> Luz and José Ignacio Oliva. 2015. "Bharati Mukherjee's Struggle Against Cultural Balkanization: The Forging of a New American Immigrant Writing". *Indi@logs* 2: 77-92.
- Knott, Kim. 1998. *Hinduism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mukherjee, Bharati. 1985. *Darkness*. Ontario: Penguin books.
- Spivak, Gayatri. 1988. "Can the Subaltern Speak?". Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Sugirtharajah, Sharada. 2002. "Hinduism and Feminism: Some Concerns". *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 18 (2): 97-104.

**Keywords:** Bharati Mukherjee; femininity; the Other; assimilation; dharma

## The Dimensions of Trauma in the Work of William Faulkner

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### Abstract [paper]

Being subjected to a variegated array of conscience-shattering phenomena, the foundational claim of the present study is that William Faulkner's narrative subject is first and foremost a traumatized individual. Thus, my endeavour is to use the literary theory of trauma (originally articulated by the Yale School in the early 90's) as the theoretical framework for the analysis of William Faulkner's *oeuvre* in order to study the narrative—micro and macrostructural—trauma-laden substratum of the author's work. With a strong historiographic and psychoanalytic foundation, the multidisciplinary apparatus of trauma theory is essentially concerned with unveiling the imprint of extreme experiences upon the individual and communal psyche, while problematizing the limits of said experiences' representation in fictive and historical memory. In this sense, trauma theory (Caruth 1995, 1996; Nadal and Calvo 2014; Vickroy 2004) will enable a symbolic, clinical and psychosocial analysis of Faulknerian characters' trauma and the subsequent decoding of their literary representation. Given the prominence that the depiction of traumatic shock has received in these works, the initial corpus of my project is constituted by four of William Faulkner's most acclaimed titles, namely: *The Sound and the Fury* (1929), *As I Lay Dying* (1930), *Light in August* (1932) and *Absalom, Absalom* (1936). Preliminary results of this study have led towards the profiling of different dimensions of wounding codified thematically, stylistically and structurally across the author's body of work. More specifically, at the initial stage of my research, Faulknerian trauma has proven to be a polymorphic entity adopting the surface form of mental ailments, devious psycho-affective drives, dysfunctional racialized subjectivities, conflictive gender relations and social alienation, among others.

### References:

- Caruth, Cathy. (ed.). 1995. *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
- Caruth, Cathy. 1996. *Unclaimed Experience*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
- Nadal, Marita and Mónica Calvo. (eds.) 2014. *Trauma in Contemporary Literature: Narrative and Representation*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Vickroy, Laurie. 2004. *Trauma and Survival in Contemporary Fiction*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.

**Keywords:** trauma theory; William Faulkner; North-American literature

## Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: A Response to the New Cultural Logic of Transmodernity

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### Abstract [poster]

Globalization, modern-day technologies and the latest geopolitical changes are driving contemporary society to a new paradigm which has been called Transmodernity. According to Rodríguez Magda, this new reality “both transnational and virtual” (2019: 23) indicates a synthesis between and transcendence of Modernity and Postmodernity and entails interconnectedness and constant transformation. Moreover, the resulting “glocalization” of migration flows has led scholars to consider Transmodernity “a change to a broader cross-boundary awareness” (Ateljevic 2013: 216). This transcending character of Transmodernity has been discussed as a tool to defeat barriers and fixed categories, including gender inequalities. For instance, García Aguilar (2014) believes that transmodern feminism can leverage postmodern plurality and simulacra to form a constructed but chosen identity and thus create a new inclusive and plural genealogy for women. Similarly, Ferree and Tripp consider that “feminism today [...] is best understood to be a truly global phenomenon: a product of transnational dialogues and disagreements, coalitions and networks” (2006: viii).

The Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie stands out among the contemporary community of authors who are responding to this new cultural logic. My thesis analyzes her three novels and short stories highlighting how they echo the most recent socio-cultural transformations. It starts examining representations of postmodern trauma and memory frictions, then it explores transculturality and diasporic space and finishes by analyzing Adichie’s expression of transmodernity and reflection on modern identities. Drawing on intersectionality, I also examine Adichie’s texts to demonstrate how her representations of resilient women who defy gender stereotypes and challenge conventional interpretations of blackness and whiteness embody the main challenges and aims of transnational feminism and therefore expand the concept of transmodern feminism. Lastly, the fact that she comes from a non-western country commonly underrepresented and her unstoppable success and impact on today’s society, reveal the importance of her works to understand the diversity and complexity of the current transmodern paradigm.

### References:

- Ateljevic, Irena. 2013. “Visions of Transmodernity: A New Renaissance of our Human History?”. *Integral Review* 2 (9): 200-219.
- Ferree, Myra Marx and Aili Mari Tripp. 2006. *Global Feminism: Transnational Women’s Activism, Organizing, and Human Rights*. New York: New York University Press.
- García Aguilar, María del Carmen. 2014. “Contemporary Feminism: Beyond Postmodernity”. *Palabra* 14 (14): 158-172.
- Rodríguez Magda, Rosa María. 2019. “The Crossroads of Transmodernity”. In Aliaga-Lavrijsen, Jessica and José María Yebra-Pertusa (eds.) *Transmodern Perspectives on Contemporary Literatures in English*. New York: Routledge: 21-29.

**Keywords:** transmodernity; transculturality; modern identities, transnational feminism; Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

## Research and Reflections on a Project Enhanced EFL Teacher Training Model

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### Abstract [paper]

Preparing pre-service English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers for their professional futures within our rapidly changing world of the twenty-first century is a responsibility that must be taken very seriously. Learners in all stages of Education require and deserve ample opportunities to develop knowledge, understanding and success skills that will allow them to be competent global citizens. These learning opportunities have to be designed and implemented by education professionals who are able to link theory, research data and their own skills adapting to the specific contexts in which they are immersed. This paper shows how my research and PhD dissertation aim to explore the connections between three key theoretical dimensions: 1) Second Language Acquisition Theories (Brown 2010; Larsen Freeman and Long 2014), 2) Cognitive Learning Theories (Hattie 2018; Marzano 2007) and 3) Project Based Learning (Clark 2009). These theoretical frameworks have been combined in order to yield an effective teacher training model that educational professionals can use for the promotion of effective learning in EFL and CLIL Primary and Secondary Education classrooms. Through the design and administration of questionnaires, focus interviews and onsite observations I hope to take on a qualitative study of the implementation and effects of this teacher training model on practitioners in different contexts within Aragón. Taking on an ethnographic approach, a community of practitioners will be created where the findings of the study and the self-reflections generated will be used to improve the practice of both English as a Foreign Language teachers and teacher trainers. Preliminary results of this research on practitioners' perceptions and applications of their teacher training combining the three theoretical dimensions will be presented. They will allow us to continue to readjust and improve teacher training programs leading to best practices in bilingual Primary and Secondary classrooms that may eventually bring about significant positive change in many learners of English.

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**Keywords:** teacher training; Second Language Acquisition; learning; Project Based Learning; professional development

## Are They Posthuman? The Homo Post Hominem in David Palmer's *Emergence*

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### Abstract [paper]

It was in the 1960s that philosophers started to question the future of the human being. In 1966, Michel Foucault proposed in the conclusion to his book *The Order of Things*, that “man is an invention of recent date. And one perhaps nearing its end” (2005: 422). Theorist Ihab Hassan was one of the first philosophers who tried to find a new concept for this idea by explaining that “humanism transforms itself into something that we must helplessly call posthumanism” (1977: 843). Since then, different trends have developed within the field of posthuman studies that scrutinize what it means to be human from a variety of angles—from Braidotti's (2016) emphasis on the “humanimal” and nature-culture continuum to more radical stances like MacCormack's (2012) proposal of human extinction as posthuman ethical intervention.

When David Palmer published his novel *Emergence* in 1984, the concept of the posthuman was still new, but he chose to call the sole survivors of a bionuclear catastrophe “homo post hominems”: more intelligent, stronger and healthier beings than the average human. In his fiction, humankind changes by genetic mutations triggered by the Spanish Flu and not by technical modifications. The average human, however, is annihilated. It is remarkable that he calls his characters “homo post hominems” at a time when the discussion about the human future is just beginning, thus suggesting a new race emerging after the extinction of the human race.

By combining narratological analysis of *Emergence* and the theoretical framework of posthuman studies, I want to examine in which way Palmer's fiction predicts a possible development of the human being and whether these new “homo post hominems” are really a new species or only human beings with better developed genes who therefore cannot represent the posthuman.

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**Keywords:** David Palmer; homo post hominem; genetic mutation; bionuclear war; posthumanism

## What Might Have Been: Potential Past in *Poem Without a Hero* and *Four Quartets*

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### Abstract [paper]

The concept of time is as basic as it is complex. Being one of the essential criteria of existence, it remains one of the least known notions, especially if we are to consider all the angles that time holds within itself. In the present paper, I shall focus on the significantly understudied time dimension of “what might have been” and its potential by means of comparison between Anna Akhmatova's *Poem Without a Hero* and Thomas Stearns Eliot's *Four Quartets*. These particular texts are brought for comparison as, firstly, they represent two of the most celebrated Modernist poems (Akhmatova's for Russian Modernism, Eliot's for Western Modernism). Secondly, these poems were to encapsulate the two poets' worldview, hence, they reflect the most profound beliefs and values that Eliot and Akhmatova intended to transmit to their contemporaries and future generations. Thirdly, the poems revolve around the concept of time and delve into various of its modes. By doing so, the *Poem* and *Quartets* introduce the power of that which never happened and its capacity of shaping our present and future.

The textual and contextual analysis of the poems highlights both the resemblance and contrast between the two. The poems are highly concerned with the significance of the potential past. Yet, while Akhmatova's evident and unfading concern with guilt and regret gives to this potential past considerable presence and even life in *Poem Without a Hero*, Eliot, despite having regrets and paying tribute to the notion as well, does not allow it to become of the same importance as the actual past or present, the way his Russian counterpart does. Drawing on Lyndall Gordon (1998) and Elaine Feinstein (2006), the aim of this paper is precisely to demonstrate the difference in the poets' attitude towards “what might have been” may be explained by the fact that the Eliot of *Four Quartets* is a believer who has discovered truth amidst the tragedy of history, yet Akhmatova of *Poem Without a Hero* faces the inexpressible horrors of totalitarianism.

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**Keywords:** Modernism; poetry; concept of time; comparative studies

## Richard Powers's *Generosity: An Enhancement* (2009) A Metafictional Reflection on the Biotechnological Pursuit of Happiness

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### Abstract [poster]

The possibility of using technology to alleviate suffering and, ultimately, increase human happiness levels stands as one of the leading enhancement options discussed in transhumanist circles. The Transhumanist Declaration—a document first crafted in 1998 by several transhumanist thinkers—points to overcoming involuntary suffering as one of the main goals of the transhumanist movement (Bostrom et al. 2013). Some transhumanist critics go one step further and even claim that it is in fact “our ethical and political responsibility” to do whatever we can to prevent citizens from being “less happy than they otherwise could be” (Hughes 2014: 223). While transhumanist critics do acknowledge the role played by environmental factors in determining human happiness levels, they often regard happiness as essentially the product of the ‘right’ genetic coding and believe that, with the appropriate technology, predisposition to happiness could be eventually programmed or, in a worse-case scenario, that cheerfulness could be technologically induced.

In *Generosity: An Enhancement* (2009), Powers engages with both the possibilities that biotechnology offers to create happier human beings and some of the ethical challenges it poses. This paper argues that an analysis of the novel from the combined perspective of the optimistic transhumanist philosophy and the more balanced approach of critical posthumanism, with a special focus on the narrative strategies used by the writer, can most effectively bring to light the writer’s moral stance in relation to contemporary trans- and posthumanist debates on the biotechnological pursuit of happiness. More specifically, this paper argues that by means of building a self-reflexive narrative, Powers denounces the constructedness of, as well as the disembodiment and dehumanization inherent in the transhumanist view of happiness as an engineering problem. Accordingly, Power presents instead an alternative view of happiness as a state of mind that can be reached by means of being resilient in the face of our problems and enjoying the present moment.

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**Keywords:** transhumanism; critical posthumanism; happiness; biotechnology; metafiction

## How to Dub Multilingual Humour into Spanish? A Case Study Analysing the American TV Series *Modern Family*

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### Abstract [paper]

Society is now living in a globalised world where different countries, communities and people are more and more connected. As the reflection of this reality, audiovisual productions also feature characters who have a bilingual or even a multilingual background. This fact enriches the text and poses some difficulties to the translator in order to transmit it to another language and culture. There are other features involved in the translation of audiovisual texts apart from words that entail some *technical manipulation* (Díaz-Cintas 2012: 284-285) of the text to be accepted as an original. When dubbing is the modality chosen, more challenges arise and more difficulties the translator has to face, since factors such as synchrony have an important role in the process. It will depend on several aspects like the context, the genre or the target audience to decide whether to transfer or to eliminate the multilingualism in the audiovisual translation. Another important factor is the purpose, since the use of multilingualism in audiovisual texts might be a perfect tool in order to create humour. This is the case of the corpus of this research, the American TV series *Modern Family* (Christopher Lloyd and Steven Levitan 2009-2019), which portrays the life of a complex family. The study concentrates on Gloria Delgado-Pritchett, a Colombian strong woman who, despite living for years in the United States and being married with an American, still mixes English and Spanish using a strong Colombian accent. Her code-switch and code-mix (Dore 2019: 52) lead to hilarious situations, which arise from her linguistic misunderstandings. In this study I analyse how the multilingualism embodied in Gloria's character is transferred into Spanish. Besides, the different changes, adaptations or *functional manipulations* (Dore 2019: 58) carried out by the translator to fit the standards and requirements of the target audience are studied.

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### Filmography:

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**Keywords:** dubbing; humour; sitcom; multilingualism; code-switch; code-mix

## Other Possible Wars: Genre, Metafiction and the Ethics of Art in Michael Chabon's *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay*

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### Abstract [paper]

Throughout the twenty-first century, American fiction has attempted to overcome the stage of irony from late postmodernism towards an agenda of political and social reform. Contemporary authors have approached this task taking into account the literary and critical tradition of their country and showing awareness of the inseparable relationship between truth and deceit in a post-capitalist society (Kelly 2016). In this line, Michael Chabon's practice is often characterized by his adoption of plots and motifs from American popular culture and his use of a realistic mode and experimental narrative techniques with a double purpose: exploring the meanings of contemporary Jewish identity and interrogating the legitimacy of American myths and narratives.

Chabon's novel *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay* (2000) offers a dialectic view of contemporary Jewish-American identity through the story of Joe Kavalier, a young artist who leaves his native Prague for Brooklyn to escape the Holocaust, and his American cousin Sammy Clay, who will inspire Joe to use his art to work through his trauma (LaCapra 2001). In this paper, I intend to read the novel as a type of Jewish-American fiction that engages in the revision of the notions of tradition and hybrid identity, especially following the Shoah (Wisse 2000). For this purpose, Chabon contemplates an intersection between the self-reflexive practice of postmodernist fiction and the ethical possibilities of narrative and art. In this sense, I aim to examine Chabon's use of metafictional strategies as well as the meanings of creativity within the ontological frame of the main characters. In line with Lévinas's ideas (2001), I will discuss the novel's position regarding the role of fiction in the articulation of the discourse of alterity, embodied in the Jewish characters represented.

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**Keywords:** Michael Chabon; Jewish fiction; metafiction; trauma; ethics

## Poetics of Low-Budget Cinema

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### Abstract [poster]

One of the fundamental dichotomies within film studies is that between indie and mainstream cinema. This is a problematic approach to cinema since, in a world where large corporations control a big slice of independent studies, the indie concept has lost the connotations of previous decades.

The usual answer has been to propose a discursive solution, analyzing the variations of the indie concept in relation to commercial cinema (Tzioumakis 2006). However, there is an alternative which has been systematically ignored in the current state of the art: its material conditions or, in other words, the budget. Thus, for instance, two films with a similar script will not be enabled to express the same depending on the budget invested.

An analysis of this kind cannot ignore the historical context. Our study will deal with the 21<sup>th</sup> century American Cinema and the concept of crisis. The latter at an economic and civilization level, but also understood as the transition of cinema to a digital medium.

Taking all of the aforementioned issues into account, this research focuses on how (low) budget affects the tone, mood and feel of films. I will be building upon the Cognitive Theory (Greg M. Smith 2003) and the Affective Theory (Marks 2000), because these methodologies explore how the relation between budget and films concerns not only the narrative level but, above all, the affective atmosphere which each movie displays. Therefore, the objective of this paper is to demonstrate how low-budget cinema has its own particular representational solutions and emotional tonalities, which differentiate these productions from Hollywood cinema and Indie films with medium and big budgets.

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**Keywords:** low-budget cinema; indie; crisis; affective theory; poetics of cinema

## Time's Up for a Change of Political Focus: Katniss Everdeen's Eco-Feminist Leadership

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### Abstract [paper]

This paper explores the eco-feminist leadership that Katniss Everdeen (Jennifer Lawrence) embodies in *The Hunger Games* film series (2012-2015). As networked social movements consolidate a cosmopolitan ecosystem of political dissent concerned with global pressing issues like climate change, social inequality and gender discrimination (Castells 2012; Parvu 2018), film rebellious female leads like Katniss illustrate renovated political cultures that defy material, territorial and patriarchal paradigms. Katniss enacts a type of political agency informed by the care ethics and nurturing relations traditionally associated with family and community life. She conceives the local and the global, the private and the public as interrelated dimensions of a diverse yet unitary eco-socio-political habitat we should all look after.

Drawing on contemporary film, feminist and sociological theory, and referring to related twenty-first century movies, the paper explores how the series' protagonist shows that, as Mary Beard argues in *Women and Power*, "you cannot easily fit women into a structure that is coded as male; you have to change the structure" (2017: 86). The natural spaces she often escapes to and her cooperation with others across the districts' borders highlight the interconnected histories of gender, racial and ecological domination. Despite a surprising pastoral redefinition of the protagonist as a mother of two in the last scene of the franchise, Katniss's transgression of gender roles throughout the series and the films' formal devices articulate an egalitarian framework of utopian possibility linked to cosmopolitan and ecological principles.

At the same time as young ecological activists like Greta Thunberg are taking their demands to streets across the world, protagonists like Katniss conform a new generation of cinematic political actors for whom eco-social welfare and egalitarianism are tied to personal growth and wellbeing (Noyes 2015). "A creature as unquenchable as the sun", as *The Mockingjay-Part II* poster refers to her, Katniss eventually represents the political potential of eco-feminist perspectives in the configuration of cosmopolitan futures.

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**Keywords:** eco-feminism; *The Hunger Games*; cosmopolitanism; social movements; care ethics

## Language Learning Styles and Productive Lexicon of Adolescent EFL Learners

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### Abstract [poster]

This PhD thesis focuses on language learning styles and productive lexicon, specifically productive vocabulary and word association. Scholars have explored the influence of language learning styles (Reid 1987), productive vocabulary (Castro García 2017), and word association (Jiménez Catalán and Canga Alonso 2019) in EFL learners. However, to my knowledge, there is a lack of research on language learning styles in relation to productive vocabulary and word association in a foreign language. The first objective aims at identifying EFL learners' learning styles, productive vocabulary and word association. Secondly, I pursue to determine if there is a statistically significant relationship between language learning styles and productive vocabulary, and between learning styles and word association. Finally, I would like to ascertain whether a higher score on productive vocabulary implies a better knowledge of learning styles and a higher production of words in the word association task.

The sample consists of sixty EFL learners at the second year of Spanish non-compulsory Secondary Education. Regarding data collection instruments, the *Learning Styles Survey* by Cohen, Oxford and Chi (2009) is the instrument employed to identify informants' learning styles. To measure their productive lexicon, a word association task and the parallel version (A+C) of the *Productive Vocabulary Levels Test* by Laufer and Nation (1999) are administered. Afterwards, students' answers are processed electronically. The expected results of this investigation are that those learners who achieve higher scores on productive vocabulary and are aware of their language learning styles will be the ones who will perform better in the word association task. All in all, these outcomes could give an insight into language learning processes and evidence of how individual learning styles might affect vocabulary performance.

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**Keywords:** language learning styles; productive vocabulary; word association; EFL learners; second year of Spanish non-compulsory Secondary Education

## ***MaddAddam: When the Monster is Beautiful***

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### **Abstract [paper]**

Intertextual references to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) are evident in Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam* trilogy. However, while *Frankenstein* shows the delusion and failure of Victor Frankenstein trying to create a perfect "new man," in *MaddAddam* the Crakers apparently inspire hope and success in the evolutionary step. In *Frankenstein*, according to Carretero-González, the source of failure was the encounter between the creature and his creator and the latter's refusal to ethically recognize the creature's humanness—due to the monster's ugliness and grotesque features. However, it is my contention that if the community of MaddAddamites eventually merges with the Crakers it is precisely because the human survivors are able to see them as beautiful, and "human enough." This assumption is more closely related to a notion of the posthuman subject as defined by critical posthumanism: "When the genetic code is no longer human, then we cannot speak of a posthuman because a posthuman being is still human" (Rossini, Manuela, n.d., p. n.p.). My proposal shows that it is only when the human survivors learn that Craker/human reproductive abilities are still possible and when both groups start to share memories and culture that the bonds between the posthuman and the human are established. Moreover, the bridge between the posthuman Crakers and the human survivors is built by female humans: through the young fertile women's miscegenation with the Crakers and Toby's role as their cultural/spiritual mother. Nevertheless, the result in *MaddAddam* is a heterosexual society that still maintains a strong gender-role division in an apparent backlash for women's opportunities and rights.

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**Keywords:** Atwood; posthuman identities; posthuman creatures; posthuman ethics; mad scientists

## Multidirectional Memory and Metropolitan Alienation in Jean Rhys's *Voyage in the Dark*

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### Abstract [paper]

The fiction of Jean Rhys (1890-1979) draws largely on her own experience as a woman unable to find shelter in a monolithic Britain that neglected her Caribbeanness. This paper will focus on the novel *Voyage in the Dark* (1934), in which she provides a comprehensive portrayal of metropolitan alienation through the internal narration of Anna Morgan, an eighteen-year-old Caribbean woman who has recently arrived in England. As is the case with the rest of Rhys's work, the targeted novel is highly autobiographical. However, I would like to go beyond the two-way dialogue between individuals (author and character) by arguing that this novel gives expression to a number of traumas—in this case metropolitan alienation—that are not necessarily personal, but that are shared by collectivities. Hence, my main contention is that this novel enables Rhys to expose the (hi)story and memories of urban strangers as a group. As regards methodology, I will approach Rhys's novel through Michael Rothberg's multidirectional model of memory. Accordingly, I will draw some parallels between the (auto)biography of Jean Rhys, the (hi)story of Anna and the alienation of some apparently minor characters in the novel. As for results, it has been found that Rhys provides a thorough representation of the collective trauma of the underdog by juxtaposing her memories and those of Anna Morgan with the inner conflicts of the urban strangers who found themselves economically and emotionally helpless in 1930s London. Hence, she ultimately succeeds in going beyond the individual testimony so as to give voice to the helpless collectivity of urban strangers.

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**Keywords:** Jean Rhys; multidirectional memory; metropolitan alienation; trauma; autobiography

## An Ecocritical Reading of George R.R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire*

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### Abstract [poster]

*A Song of Ice and Fire* by George R.R. Martin, which inspired the world-famous TV series *Game of Thrones*, can be considered a world phenomenon. Nonetheless, it has still only timidly been met with academic interest. Although some collections of essays have been released, one particularly interesting issue has not been addressed: the way the saga presents the role of humanity on the planet as part of a bigger and more powerful system – the ecosystem. Hence, this thesis aims at conducting a textual analysis of the saga from an ecocritical perspective, focusing on the way it portrays humanity within nature and their relationship with the more-than-human world. Moreover, this paper argues that Martin's saga can be seen as a narrative of climate change and environmental crisis, or Cli-fi, as defined by Goodbody and Johns-Putra (2019), not only because the inhabitants of the Seven Kingdoms are facing an inevitable environmental disaster, but also because of the way the Westerosi deal with it, chiefly overlooking its importance or even denying its existence. With a view to proving it, different ecocritical theories, such as ecophobia developed by Simon Estok (2018), Glotfelty and Harold's (1996) and Plumwood's (2002) environmental ethics, among others, will be applied to Martin's saga. This paper will eventually reveal that Martin recreates the different stages of the human-nonhuman relationship, the gradual shift towards a more anthropocentric positioning and its consequent mastery of and detachment from nature. Instead, a more ecocentric worldview and the creation of a holistic biocommunity are presented as a possible solution to the coming environmental disaster. Therefore, this paper argues that *A Song of Ice and Fire* can be used with didactic purposes in order to teach environmental ethical issues as well as to put the spotlight on our role, as individuals as well as society, in the causes and solutions of our own environmental crisis.

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**Keywords:** ecocriticism; climate change; *Game of Thrones*; George R.R. Martin; *A Song of Ice and Fire*

## Linguistic Pointers for the Generation and Understanding of Hyperbole

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### Abstract [paper]

Hyperbole has been studied from such different perspectives as pragmatics (Sperber and Wilson 1995), psycholinguistics (Colston and O'Brien 2000), or Cognitive Linguistics (Ruiz de Mendoza 2014; Peña and Ruiz de Mendoza 2017). Within Cognitive Linguistics, Ruiz de Mendoza (2014: 194-195) has defined hyperbole as a mapping across two conceptual domains, a source domain or magnified scenario and a target domain or real scenario. Speakers use the source domain to make sense of the target domain. Hyperbolic markers are linguistic pointers to potential hyperbolic contexts (Pomerantz 1986). This proposal contributes to previous work on hyperbole-prone expressions from the point of view of Cognitive Linguistics. More specifically, relying on corpus data, I offer a broad list of hyperbolic markers, mitigators, and blockers that usually co-occur with hyperbolic utterances. The corpus consists of 200 examples that contain hyperbolic markers such as *in the world/universe, of all time, and ever* taken from Google and from the *Corpus of Contemporary American English*. I study the way in which these linguistic mechanisms help to set up imaginary scenarios that clash with real-world situations in order to prompt emotional reactions. Moreover, it is argued that hyperbolic pointers function as hyperbolic domains of reference indicators (i.e. they do not produce hyperbolic meaning on their own, but require other linguistic elements like superlatives to strengthen the hyperbolic interpretation). I also examine some hyperbolic mitigators and blockers that co-occur with the hyperbolic markers object of study. For example, the hyperbolic load of the adverb *ever* is lessened by expressions such as 'maybe' (e.g. *Maybe I'm the best ever*) or even cancelled out by elements like 'according to' (e.g. *Here are the 100 Worst Songs Ever according to AOL Radio Blog*). Our examination of corpus examples shows that these linguistic devices play a key role in the production and recognition of hyperbolic meaning.

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**Keywords:** Cognitive Linguistics; hyperbole; hyperbolic markers; hyperbolic mitigators; hyperbolic blockers

## A Pragmatic Approach to the Visual and Verbal Components in Research Project Homepages

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### Abstract [paper]

Texts and genres in digital environments purposefully combine visual and verbal components in the crafting of their structure. Homepages act as the window entrance to a website and the first layer of meaning and effect for the readership. Subsequently, layout seems a meaningful notion to pragmatically display one's specific intent through verbal and visual resources. This qualitative study focuses on international research project homepages and seeks to analyse their layout together with the different verbal and visual components that make them up from a pragmatic perspective. Accordingly, a corpus of 10 homepages managed by H2020-funded research projects were selected. Layout, referring to the code of spatial composition (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006), served as an analytical tool to delve into the structure of the homepage and the distribution of texts. Results stem from a three-fold analysis that, first, groups texts into clusters and considers the organization of the website sections in the homepages as the user may scroll down, to understand their saliency and function within the homepage composition. Second, the range and the frequency of modal resources (e.g. logos, images, videos, hyperlinks) are discussed, as featured in the homepage and as part of the different clusters. Third, a pragmatic analysis distinguishing three scopes or meta-functions (communicative, promotional and interactional) is proposed to match the layout and composition of the homepage, the modal resources displayed and the potential pragmatic intent behind. This study may contribute to identifying research groups' communicative purposes and practices when showcasing their research projects digitally by observing the pragmatic strategies conveyed in the mixing of the verbal and visual aspects. This can further help understand the complexity of the discursive and professional practices of researchers nowadays, especially in international and digital scenarios.

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Kress, Gunther and Theo van Leeuwen. 2006. *Reading Images. The Grammar of Visual Design*. London: Routledge.

**Keywords:** project homepages; research project websites; layout; pragmatic analysis; visual components

## The Impact of Music Communities “Fandoms” on L3 Learner Identity and Language Variation

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### Abstract [paper]

The multilingual models that exist in the Basque learning context aim to provide a balanced mastery of both Basque and Spanish, while in theory, being able to show students the language learning agency they have past the classroom walls. A challenge arises when looking at how this model provides education of the third language (L3), English, a language with which many students struggle in achieving proficiency (Cenoz 2005). This sociolinguistics paper focuses on the impact that being a fan of a music produced in English has on identity and the development of the English as an L3 within a cohort of eight young adults from the Greater Bilbao area (Biscay), with specific attention paid to the idea of fan loyalty, as is discussed by Obiegbu, Larsen Ellis and O’Reilly (2019). The two central research questions this paper addresses are: *Does the place of origin of the music input affect the learner’s choice of a variety of English?* as was inspired by Johnstone Young and Walsh (2010), and *How is the learner’s identity affected by music inputs?* as was inspired by Boer, Fischer, Strack, Bond, Lo and Lam (2011).

In this paper, we presented a review of the literature related to inclusion and identity within the communities of practice ‘fandoms’ of music (Wenger 1998); we carried out a case study about opinions of language learning through personal experience in the communities of practice; and we considered the pedagogical potential for media-based education through music. The qualitative study was conducted through the format of an open-ended questionnaire separated by musical preferences, language learning related questions, and identity-based questions. The results of the study indicate that the place of origin of the music input did not impact the participants’ choice to learn a certain variety of English, however, participants in this study underlined the relevance and their unanimous recommitment to learning the language after becoming a fan of an artist that sings in English. The applications and limitations of this study are then discussed by the authors.

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**Keywords:** learner identity; communities of practice; sociolinguistic variation; media-based education; Englishes

## Growing Up is Harder When You Peaked in High School: Homecoming and Delayed Adulthood in *Young Adult* (Jason Reitman 2011)

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### Abstract [paper]

In the past fifty years, several developments such as the ever-growing need for educated individuals in post-industrial societies, the delay of marriage and parenthood, changing attitudes towards traditional adulthood and the increasing difficulty to attain economic stability have led to the rise of emerging adulthood, an in-between stage between adolescence and adulthood (Arnett and Taber 1994; Arnett 2004; Sironi 2017). As the prevalence of emerging adulthood grew, emerging adult characters became more common, and with them a body of films whose narratives focus on the trials and tribulations of this particular life stage: the emerging adult film.

Emerging adult films often feature homecoming narratives in which the protagonist sets off on a backwards journey to their hometown. This journey, usually sparked by a personal crisis—the end of a relationship, unemployment, etc.—or by a celebration of an adult milestone—weddings, high school reunions, etc.—forces the protagonists to come face to face with their adolescent selves and to assess the progress (or lack thereof) that they have made since they left.

*Young Adult* (Jason Reitman 2011), presents a case of pathological attachment to one's adolescent self. Although the protagonist is well into her thirties, she has held on to her teenage years by constantly rewriting her own adolescence into the young adult book series that she ghostwrites. This paper explores how the protagonist's unhealthy nostalgia prevents her from attaining adulthood, focusing on how holding on to her popularity as a teenager has led to an isolated and unfulfilled life as a thirtysomething and how the protagonist's focus on the superficial aspects that define popularity in high school—beauty and wealth—have turned her life into a charade in which adulthood—and, more specifically, womanhood—consists in a carefully orchestrated performance rather than individual growth.

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**Keywords:** emerging adulthood; youth film; homecoming narratives; transition to adulthood

## Louise Erdrich's *The Round House*: A Twenty-First Century Realist Bildungsroman of Detectives, Heroes and Wiindigoog

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### Abstract [paper]

In the last few years, many critics like Robert McLaughlin (2004), Robin van den Akker and Timotheus Vermeulen (2017) have noted a shift from postmodernism to realism in narrative fiction which they regard as a response of contemporary authors to the numerous socio-economic and political changes which have occurred since the turn of the millennium. Significantly enough, in spite of the traditional association of realism to the colonial project, the new “realist impulse” is also visible in a good range of contemporary ethnic/postcolonial authors who want to urgently represent their communities’ current conditions (Anjaria 2016: 278).

This is the case of Native American writer, Louise Erdrich, who shifts from a formerly labyrinthine postmodern style of multiple narrators (Quennet 2011: 8) to a clearer, more linear and less polyphonic one in her novel *The Round House* (2012). This coming-of-age thriller—an unusual genre for Erdrich—through which she denounces the systemic sexual violence over Native women on reservations, revolves around an ordinary Native American teenage male-narrator who will have to deal with the traumatic rape of his mother by an unprosecuted racist man who he regards as the *wiindigoog* or cannibal human-monster of Ojibwe mythology. Determined to take justice into his own hands, in his search for the perpetrator, this *pícaro*-like hero will learn not only valuable moral and ethical lessons, but also the historical and political reasons why US institutions do not provide his family and community with the peace and justice they deserve.

The aim of this paper is to demonstrate through the analysis of the novel’s generic form, narrative voice, and some crucial motifs and themes that Erdrich’s deliberate move to a more stripped-down prose responds to her intention of making her non-Native readers aware of the ongoing effects of US patriarchal neocolonialism on Indian country.

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**Keywords:** Louise Erdrich; Native American literature; twenty-first century realism; Native American Bildungsroman.

## Modernism, Diaries and Fiction: Virginia Woolf and Hope Mirrlees

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### Abstract [paper]

Nineteenth and twentieth century Modernism transformed the aesthetics, philosophy and subjectivities of global realities and modern societies. Modernists revealed a socio-cultural revolution in the established patterns of tradition, modes of expression and narrative forms. In literature, the terms of twentieth-century writers centred on vanguard, experimentation and innovation. Writers' re-evaluation of convention came to define the literary canon, a predominant masculine Modernism in which "Virginia Woolf remains the only writer assured of her academic status", while Hope Helen Mirrlees' location is a complex case (Connor 2014: 177).

Hope Mirrlees' *Paris: A Poem* (1919), the fifth published work of the Hogarth Press, evidences its author's influence in Modernism and her contemporaries. Yet, Woolf's diaries and correspondence are still the main source of information about Mirrlees' literary career. Her correspondence presents Mirrlees as a promising author come to naught and failure, providing a contextual lens to enquire on the meeting points of women's writing alongside the canon of English literature, and on the margins of Modernism. By framing my analysis on Julia Briggs's (2006: 81) views, hinting the paramount—but undocumented—importance of Mirrlees in Woolf's experimental grounds, I will proceed through a feminist reading of Mirrlees' writing regarding Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929). I will examine Woolf's memorabilia as a unitary picture of Modernism, looking into how Mirrlees was remembered as an other-than-Woolf. Given Woolf's commitment to modernity, I will address Ann Banfield's monograph (2000) in order to establish a comparison between the author's influences and dominant attitudes towards fiction, and, Mirrlees' reappraisal of writing under the magnetism of Jane Harrison's scholarship. In this light, a review of the archives of Modernism, its principles and non-anthologised practitioners could bring an important piece to the jigsaw puzzle of twentieth-century women writers and modernists outside the canon.

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**Keywords:** Hope Mirrlees; Virginia Woolf; Modernism; biography; fiction

## The Price of Motherhood: A Study on Maternity in Maggie O'Farrell's novels

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### Abstract [paper]

Novels by Maggie O'Farrell (1972) deal with several social aspects involving family dramas mainly focused on women's identity, maternity, adoption, and abortion from different decades of the twentieth century which are still relevant nowadays. Nowhere is this more clearly seen than in *After You'd Gone* (2000), *The Vanishing Act of Esme Lennox* (2006), *The Hand That First Held Mine* (2009), and *Instructions for a Heatwave* (2013), which are going to be analysed through a feminist close reading.

O'Farrell's novels have been repeatedly awarded and yet, despite the controversy and discussion they may cause, she has received little scholarly attention. This dissertation, thus, analyses how motherhood and the loss of a child influence women's identity in Maggie O'Farrell's novels. The main aim of this study is not only to examine different types of motherhood and to see how they affect women's identity, but also to evaluate the power of society on maternity. Another objective is to interpret the portrayal of pregnancy as a merry and sorrowful state depending on the experience of the different characters. All these aspects, which suggest that O'Farrell is influenced by the works of Charlotte Brontë and Charlotte Perkins Gilman, will be studied through the theories on maternity by Simone de Beauvoir (1949), Elaine Hansen (1997), Jacqueline Rose (2018), Virginia Woolf (1929), and Elaine Showalter (1987), among others. This doctoral dissertation addresses the following questions: what do Maggie O'Farrell's novels contribute to the literary representation of maternity in contemporary British fiction? Do all her characters actually decide to become mothers? Why are pregnancy and motherhood represented as negative in her novels? O'Farrell puts her female characters on the motherhood dilemma pressured by society and their families and depicts pregnancy as an adverse experience which they all have to cope with: it is fruit of an infidelity or rape, the principal source of depression, and the reason for adoption.

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**Keywords:** Maggie O'Farrell; maternity; adoption; abortion; women's identity; pregnancy

## The Melancholy of Non-Belonging: A Study on Gender, Race and Identity

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### Abstract [poster]

Melancholy has been a prolific topic of discussion in fields ranging from classical philosophy, anthropology, sociology and psychology, to literary studies. The birth of psychoanalysis as a discipline in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century by the hand of Sigmund Freud marked a milestone that drew closer together literary studies and psychology by offering a seemingly consistent framework of study and interpretation of the human psyche and its representation in literature. Hence, the aim of this poster is to succinctly trace back the genealogy of melancholy from its earliest notions up to feminist and queer redefinitions so as to provide a comprehensive framework of analysis of the structures of feeling that the often alienated characters in contemporary British authors' novels, namely, Sarah Waters, Ali Smith and Jackie Kay, display. Thus, my proposal will explore the contingent relationship between melancholy and non-normative gender, race and national identities, and the role this affect may play in the construction, deconstruction and reconstruction of the self, pondering its possible resignification. For this purpose, I will draw upon theoretical interpretations of melancholy as well as on gender and race theory through works like Sigmund Freud's "Mourning and Melancholia" (1917/1957), Julia Kristeva's *Black Sun* (1989) Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* (1990), David Eng and Sanshee Han's "A Dialogue on Racial Melancholia" (2000) and Robert Eaglestone's *Brexit and Literature* (2018), among others.

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**Keywords:** melancholy, identity, gender, race, queer

## **“Up and Down the Rio Grande.” Mapping Out the U.S.-Mexico Border in Classical Hollywood Western, 1930-1960**

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### **Abstract [paper]**

This project is particularly interested in analyzing the specific experience of cosmopolitanism within the history and culture of the United States. The US literature on cosmopolitanism has mainly studied this topic in relation to what Leslie Fiedler would term the Eastern tradition (Fielder 1969: 16-28). This tendency is based on the idea that the Western archetypal hero embodies the opposite from an Eastern and refined cosmopolite. It is also well known that the themes of violence and westward expansion uphold the ideology of American exceptionalism, making all the more difficult the enterprise of finding cosmopolitan sensibilities within a well established, national, and unilateral history of the American West. To redress this apparently monolithic ideology that unified America with Western we need a partial revision of our preconceptions on classic Westerns. Numerous films contain, in fact, antithetical and revisionist aspects and are very far from being ‘simplistic’. To accomplish this task, I borrow from Cawelti and Altman a theoretical framework on the formulaic structures of the genre based on three elements: the hero, the space and the journey (Cawelti 1984; Altman 2002).

Through a corpus of selected works spanning three decades I wish to revise the images of the hero and the views of the landscape. First, the cowboy is not just the individualistic hero but a mediator, a man who understands others and who is persuaded to moderate threats and dangers of violent behaviors. Second, even if the Frontier coincides with a progressive history based on domestication (build a town and find a home) within a unidirectional westward expansion, in many other cases, this movement is counterpointed with a much more unpredictable journey South. I wish to emphasize that, in a few interesting cases, these detours end at the Southern border, assuming a different cardinal direction within the US cultural topography. Unlike the Western, the aesthetic genre of the Southern Western does not justify the violence that permits and accompanies the westward expansion; its deepest preoccupation is bringing up and inspecting the psychological reaction of a bad conscience produced by bloody events and clashes between ethnic groups. When the Frontier meets the Border there is a discontinuity, a dramatic stop in the course of action and in the physical movement. These Southern Westerns, then, offer a contact zone that mixes characters and cultures confirming the boundary as an essential place whence cross-cultural engagements and forms of connectivity are obtained.

Drawing from Neil Campbell’s *New Western History* (Campbell 2000, 2008), this project proposes an analysis of the South-of-the-Border-Westerns as a sub-genre of the Western. Following his rhizomatic pattern, I propose to replace the concept of an essential identity rooted in one place from which all grew by the idea of routes: journeys (physical and intimate), dynamic changes, hybrid presences, different regions, multiple and overlapping areas. I wish to furnish a map of these routes that allows us to analyze this sub-genre from the point of view of socio-historical phases that take into account the US foreign policy. The analysis focuses on the transition between the Good Neighbor Policy where the idea of the border was influenced by the Popular Front’s culture to a next phase, the 1940s, based on the centrality of Ford’s controversial films. 1950s Cold-War politics made it all the more difficult to find ruptures within a cohesive ideological system. Nonetheless, a broad spectrum of heterogeneous theories and huge problems of regulations appeared at the US-Mexico border in the 1950s, making our study of a selection of films from the past necessary to understand more contemporary problems.

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**Keywords:** vernacular cosmopolitanism; classic western; US-Mexico border; sub-genre; US politics

## Fresh-Talk from Appalachia: Ron Rash and His Novels

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### Abstract [poster]

Appalachia is a unique region in terms of society and culture within the US. Its relative isolation from the rest of the country has given way to a differentiated identity, society and traditions. One of the most outstanding authors of the Appalachian region is Ron Rash. He was born and raised in the mountains of North and South Carolina and has a special attachment to and knowledge of this land. Through his novels, Rash explores issues such as poverty, drug addiction, violence and nature exploitation that have been affecting the Appalachian region for many years. Due to the insularity of the place, its inhabitants have developed a strong feeling of belonging and attachment to the land. Their distinctive culture has also contributed to creating a sense of otherness even within the US. In this context of differentiated culture, Rash evokes the characteristics of the region—landscape, traditions, language—and the devastating effects of the passing of time with a poetic voice.

The working hypothesis of my research is that Rash acts as an active agent for the improvement of Appalachian living conditions as well as a recorder of the region's unique history and culture, using his novels as vehicles for such aims. My contention is supported by Railsback, who states that "Rash's writing and work [...] often captures the ills of [...] Appalachian life from cotton lung to meth addiction." (2018: 40). Thus, drawing on a twofold theoretical framework consisting on trauma studies, based on authors such as Cathy Caruth (1996) and ecological studies, with authors such as Steven Vogel (2016), my objective is to demonstrate that in Rash's fiction, the portrayal of trauma and the destruction of the environment act as powerful literary and documentary devices that expose the negative eco-social situation of the region in order to improve it. Although Rash's work has been analysed through an eco-critical approach, I contend that the combination of eco-criticism with trauma theory can provide useful and original readings of these narratives, thereby contributing to the scholarly work on this author. Finally, in order to achieve this aim, even though my research is still in progress, in this presentation I will provide a narratological analysis of specific examples I have extracted from Rash's different novels thus far.

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- Vogel, Steven. 2016. *Thinking like a Mall: Environmental Philosophy after the End of Nature*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.

**Keywords:** grit literature; Appalachia; trauma; ecology; Ron Rash

## The Human Stain's Baby: Elisa Albert and Philip Roth's Progeny

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### Abstract [paper]

One of the new and promising Jewish American authors, Elisa Albert, was only 25 when she offered to bear Philip Roth's progeny in an infamous metafictional fan letter.<sup>1</sup> And rightfully so, because her work both owes a great debt to Roth's voice and subject, and also offers a fresh perspective, as explored by Roth scholars Aimee Pozorski and Miriam Jaffe (2017). Drawing on this connection, I intend to show how these two authors also share the use of the motif of "the human stain," a series of images that convey the meaning of impurity in order to show a metaphorical mark of imperfection on the body and to question the notion of purity, particularly as present in the Jewish Torah. Albert has claimed the Jewish label in her fiction and publicly, and at the same time pursues freedom to write about taboos and explores uneasiness with the Jewish tradition.

Both Albert and Roth explore what it means to be Jewish, especially in their first books, but what stands out, mostly from reading Albert's fiction, is the poignancy with which she portrays pain and the body. However, even though she has inherited his style and some of his most important obsessions, such as human frailty and what drives people to self-destruction, I would like to point at how she takes the rage present in Roth's work and gives it a new turn as she speaks from the Jewish women's perspective and experience. Albert's debut short stories collection, *How This Night is Different* (2016), tackles the question of what it means to be Jewish in America and not want to follow the rules, developing the subject of Philip Roth's first stories, published in 1959 (*Goodbye Columbus and Other Stories*). This paper examines these questions within those two books and Roth's novel *Sabbath's Theater* (1995) which I believe has greatly influenced Albert's *After Birth* (2015) to show how I see that Albert uses the if of the human stain combining hilarity and a sense of the absurd with a dark description of the experience of pain and loss, just like Roth did, but adding the representation of the body from a woman's point of view.

### Notes:

<sup>1</sup>This letter was published as "Etta or Bessie or Dora or Rose" in *How This Night is Different* (2006).

### References:

Albert, Elisa. 2015. *After Birth*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

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Roth, Philip. 1995. *Sabbath's Theater*. New York: Random House.

**Keywords:** Philip Roth; Elisa Albert; American Jewish literature

## Deciphering Age: Representations of Female Ageing in Contemporary Drama and Theatre

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### Abstract [paper]

Due to the so-called “longevity revolution” (Butler 2008) and the constant demographic change produced in the late twentieth century, ageing has become a universal issue for discussion among the academics from the social sciences and the humanities. The current thesis, supported by a three-year doctoral scholarship from the University of Lleida, looks at cultural representations of female ageing in contemporary dramatic texts within the English-speaking world.

In search of contemporary plays that might oppose the “master narrative of decline” based on a vision of ageing as an inevitable biological, psychological and social process of decay (Gullette 2004), the project aims at determining the ways of evolution in the representation of older women with respect to their counterparts in classical plays. In the light of the intersection between ageing, theatre and gender studies within the framework of literary gerontology, the research scrutinises how the politics of gender interact with those of age in a specific corpus of plays. It concurrently observes the differences in perception and experiencing of ageing through intergenerational dialogues about old age between middle- and old-aged characters. To this end, the study combines critical, narrative and performative approaches (Lipscomb 2012: 119) and pursues the concepts of *age as a narrative*, *cultural age*, *the performativity of age* and *the materiality of age* (Swinnen and Port 2012: 12) that are central to the interdisciplinary field of ageing studies.

The results heretofore have shown that stereotyped images of infantilized, burdensome, grumpy, physically and mentally fragile older women coexist in balance with portrayals of vivid, creative figures, fighters for sexual freedom, self-identity explorers and transgressors of socially constructed gender roles. The research incipiently suggests that cultural visibility of older women does not necessarily imply the subversion of declinist connotations and stereotypization ascribed to old age, but can definitively incite new understandings and meanings of ageing, as well as arise social awareness of and confront ageism.

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**Keywords:** literary gerontology; female ageing; ageism; cultural portrayals; contemporary theatre

## Building Bridges between EMI and ELF Research Points of View as regards International University Lectures: A Case Study at the University of Zaragoza

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### Abstract [paper]

Over the last decade a linguistic change has been especially noticeable in Higher Education contexts due to the increasing use of English as the medium of instruction. Higher education is faced with a new group of lecturers and international learners who need to use English as an academic lingua franca (ELF) predominantly to communicate with speakers with other first languages when carrying out academic activities (Smit 2010).

There is a relative lack of empirical study on ELF academic communication in Spanish universities comparing to European academic institutions (Mauranen 2006; Seidlhofer 2009). Particularly, in Spanish HE the amount of research on EMI intertwined with ELF paradigm is reduced. Most authors take on this issue within the scope of CLIL, analysing it from the perspective of the language demands and support in HE Spanish institutions (Aguilar and Rodríguez 2012; Dafouz and Núñez 2009). Therefore, my research aims to contribute to providing empirical data for ELF studies in Spanish academic contexts. Particularly, the study focuses on academic spoken language at the University of Zaragoza.

The main aim of my research is to determine the pragmatic strategies most frequently used by lecturers to achieve comprehensibility in English as medium of instruction content lectures. The study aims to show how pragmatic strategies can have an impact on the speakers' meaning making. Secondly, it aims at describing the textual practices of these lecturers, analysing the use of a currently highly common academic genre, the PowerPoint presentation.

Results derive from quantitative and qualitative corpus analysis as well as textual analysis and ethnographic research through semi-structured interviews. The analysis of the data reveals that lecturers use diverse pragmatic strategies that enable them to achieve various conversational goals such as pre-empting potential communicative breakdowns, clarifying meaning and establishing solidarity.

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**Keywords:** English as a lingua franca (ELF); pragmatic strategies; content lectures; English-medium instruction (EMI); corpus analysis