**2nd Debrecen International Graduate and Postgraduate Workshop**



Debrecen, 23 January, 2024

12:00 - 13:00 lunch break

14:30 - 15:00 coffee break

**Greetings in Room 111**

**9:45 – 10:00**

**Dr. Tibor Glant**

**Room 109**

# Panel 1 – Media, Politics, and Representation

**10:00 – 12:00**

**Chairperson: Dr. Tibor Glant**

1. **Péter Mózsi (10 mins)**

Platoon (1986) as an Anti-War Movie

1. **István Pásztor (10 mins)**

The Impact of George Lucas

1. **Nándor Attila Deli (10 mins)**

Debunking the Myth of Violence in First Person Shooter Games

1. **Regina László (10 mins)**

The 1953-54 Royal Tour and the Commonwealth: Media Representation and Implications

# Panel 2 - Literature and Society

**13:00 – 14:30**

**Chairperson: tbd**

1. **Réka Törzsök (20 mins)**

Language as a Torture Instrument in Orwell’s 1984

1. **Dóra Szokolyai (20 mins)**

A Crisis of Un-Narratibility: Romantic Love and Intertextual Fragments in Jeanette Winterson’s Novels

1. **Angelina Likhovid (20 mins)**

Dehumanization and Political Propaganda in Ali Smith’s Spring (2018)

# Panel 3 – Youth Culture and Fiction

**15:00- 16:30**

**Chairperson: tbd**

1. **Maryem Ben Salem (20 mins)**

Cruel Optimism and Resilience Discourse in the A Court of Thorns and Rose Series by Sarah J. Maas

1. **Gergely Nagy (20 mins)**

Authenticity and Immersion in Rockstar Games’ Red Dead Redemption 2

1. **MohammadReza Golshani (20 mins)**

The Aesthetic Tapestry of Political Intrigue: Analyzing Visual Elements in the Narrative of The Cat and the Coup

**Room 111**

# Panel 4 – Language, Poetics, and Pragmatics

**10:00 – 12:00**

**Chairperson: tbd**

1. **Grant William Currier (20 mins)**

Speak Of the Devil: A Lingua-Relational Approach to the First-Year College Composition Classroom

1. **Kiyotaka Sueyoshi (20 mins)**

Whitman’s Prairie ordinance: Forging Intergenerational Memories

1. **Dávid Papp (20 mins)**

Event Horizon: How Can We Know Barbie from Barbenheimer?

1. **Eszter Láncos (20 mins)**

Images of Lament: From Ancient Greece to Early Modern England (Shakespeare’s Venus and Adonis)

# Panel 5 – Film and New Media

**13:00 – 14:30**

**Chairperson: tbd**

1. **Bálint Szántó (20 mins)**

Transmedia Narratives in American Cinema

1. **Fruzsina Balázs (20 mins)**

Hopeful Horrors: Dystopian Representation of Children in Colm McCarthy’s The Girl with All the Gifts (2016)

1. **Ayoub Al-Rawashdeh (20 mins)**

The Challenges to Authentic Representation of Bedouin Culture in Theeb (Naji Abo Nowar, 2014)

# Panel 5 - Culture, Politics, and Representation

**15:00 – 16:30**

**Chairperson: Dr. Tibor Glant**

1. **Olga Kajtár-Pinjung (20 mins)**

The United States of America vs. Guantánamo Bay: Stages of Enmification and Self-Fashioning

1. **Patrick Leech (20 mins)**

Üdvözöljük az Egyesült Államokban: A Hungarian Diaspora Response to the Hungarian Refugee Crisis, 1956-1957

1. **Sándor Kiss (20 mins)**

Maintaining Hegemony and the Right to Develop: American Sentiments Regarding the Kyoto Protocol

**Péter Mózsi: Platoon (1986) as an Anti-War Movie**

This paper addresses the representation of the horror, violence and pointless massacre of the war in Vietnam in Oliver Stone’s *Platoon*. The film tells the story of a naive and optimistic American individual in his youth (played by Charlie Sheen) who volunteers for the US army to fight for his country in Vietnam. However, what he encounters is quite different from what he had expected. Believing that he would be fighting for his nation against a supposed enemy, his views about the homeland he loves and respects change to the negative as a result of what he sees during the war. The movie touches upon the individuals’ personal horrors, as every soldier who fought in Vietnam has their own trauma regarding the war. These experiences led to psychological shock among soldiers, both during and after the war. Moreover, besides introducing both the physical and the psychological horrors, the movie also functions as a protest against the army that did not treat the innocent ones – nor its very own – fairly. The great script, the masterful way of directing, the brilliant cast and the amazing soundtrack all contribute to the realistic portrayal of the carnage in the war. The movie is also particular in the sense that it portrays the brutality of the war realistically, which was the trend of war movies in the 1970s and 1980s – after the humorous representations in the 1960s. I argue that *Platoon* is clearly an anti-war movie and, – instead of celebrating – it actually condemns the USA and its entrance into the Vietnam war which caused a perennial fear among Americans.

**Keywords:** war, Oliver Stone, Platoon, violence on screen, anti-Vietnam war movement

**Bio:** Mózsi Péter I graduated from the University of Debrecen in 2022, studying English Studies BA with American and English-Hungarian Translation specializations. This autumn, I continued my studies as an MA student in American Studies at the University of Debrecen. I am mostly interested in sports and movies but -- as my abstract shows it -- also in history.

**István Pásztor: The Impact of George Lucas**

This paper evaluates the impact and legacy of the work of American movie director and producer George Lucas. In the first part his struggles as a young filmmaker and his first movies, THX-1138 and American Graffiti, are described. These two pictures helped Lucas make his dream come true, which, of course, was Star Wars. Despite the lack of time and money during production, it became an exceptional blockbuster, reaching a level of success that only very few films could achieve. The techniques used in Star Wars set new standards for visual effects and sound, changing the future of movies forever. This success allowed Lucas to operate his companies Lucasfilm and Industrial Light & Magic, developing digital film editing, sound technology and computer-generated imagery (CGI) which are now standards in modern movie making. Next, I address the Star Wars saga and the cult following created by the movies and assorted merchandise, ranging from T-shirts through computer and board games to fans and commissioned fiction by the likes of Alan Dean Foster. I will also briefly showcase his role in the rise of “New Hollywood” cinema in the mid-1970s, his return to movie making utilizing the pioneering technologies of the time in the late 90s and early 00s and take a brief look at his contributions to education through the George Lucas Education Foundation.

**Keywords:** George Lucas, Star Wars, Cinematic Technologies, New Hollywood, Education

**Nándor Attila Deli: Debunking the Myth of Violence in First Person Shooter Games**

This paper addresses a common misunderstanding surrounding violence in first-person shooter (FPS) games: It is generally believed that pupils may endanger society and even themselves if exposed to this type of game. The definition and the main characteristics of these games must be addressed in order to develop a better understanding of what FPS really is. While violence is the main attribute that is commonly associated with FPS games, the essay takes a broader approach and delves into lesser-discussed aspects of human nature influenced by this genre: for example, teamwork and communication, providing a degree of authorship and expanding one’s creativity. I aim to challenge this underlying misconception about FPS games by using already published research papers on the subject and by analyzing player experiences of this genre and their perception of aggression. I intend to highlight a disconnect between virtual violence and its impact on the real world, and also demonstrate the need for society to reshape the way we think of FPS games in general. I further illustrate the need to change society’s perception of this genre by shedding light on the popularity of the E-sport scene that is not surrounded by the notion of violence. Moreover, I will analyze how the media can influence one’s perception of violent games and explain why video games were criticized as soon as they were released.

**Keywords:** Video games, First Person Shooter, violence, misconception

**Bio:** My full name is Deli Nándor Attila, I started my master’s program in 2023 at the University ofDebrecen, where I got my bachelor’s degree as well. My main interests are cultural studies,video game studies, and history.

**Regina László: The 1953-54 Royal Tour and the Commonwealth: Media Representation and Implications**

The establishment of the British Commonwealth of Nations marked the transformation of the British Empire as a major colonial power in 1926. Some of Britain’s more valuable and strategically important colonies sought independence or a greater degree of autonomy in their relations with Britain. This process accelerated after World War II, particularly under the Attlee government. In 1949, the London Declaration was issued at the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference and it marked the foundation of the modern Commonwealth of Nations which we know today. King George VI died in 1952 and her eldest daughter, Elizabeth II was crowned in 1953. She became the Queen of the United Kingdom and the other Commonwealth realms. It has become Queen Elizabeth II’s task to reinforce the British identity after the decolonization processes of the 1950s. To achieve this goal, Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh made their 6 month long worldwide Commonwealth tour from November 1953 to December 1954. In my research, I explain the historical background of the royal tour and I give a comprehensive picture of the 1950s media representation of the royal tour by using English and Australian sources. These articles are the tools to demonstrate how this royal tour affected the lives of the subjects in the Commonwealth, and what kind of communication measures were taken to boost the idea of Britishness in a rapidly changing world.

**Keywords:** Queen Elizabeth II, royal tour, Commonwealth

**Bio**: Regina László is a 4 th -year primary school teacher in training specializing in English and Hungarian Literature and Grammar at the University of Nyíregyháza. Her pursuits focus on media analysis, and the interpretation of historical events in modern art forms, particularly in television series and movies.

**Réka Törzsök: Language as a Torture Instrument in Orwell’s 1984**

My presentation is concerned with how the climactic torture sequence of George Orwell’s 1984 (1949) exemplifies the Party’s manipulative and exploitative use of language. I shall argue that the Party’s self-generating, repetitive and paradoxically circuitous discourse is based on making the emergent meaning operate in a recursive or circular manner, undermining conventional language-use practises. Since in the Ministry of Love scenes O’Brien functions both as Winston’s torturer and the spokesman of the Party, his choice of language directly contributes to Winston’s annihilation. The performativity of torture and confession, the immeasurability and indescribability of physical suffering and the denial of the existence of the pain that is being produced are all exploited to this end. The last element is related to how, in 1984, torture altogether appears to lack epistemological results other than itself. The falsity of Winston’s confessions—wrung from him during the Party’s preliminary torture routine—might also be regarded as another key aspect of the Oceanian workings of language. Ultimately, in accordance with the absence of any concrete political ideology, the Party’s discourse is marked by vacuity and hollowness in terms of lack of meaning and is revealed to be one instrument among many that serve as a means of eliminating its enemies.

**Keywords:** Orwell, torture, language

**Bio**: Réka Törzsök is a first-year English Studies MA student at the University of Debrecen. Herresearch interests include the literary representations of violence, dystopias, queer studies andnarrativity in video games.

**Dóra Szokolyai: A Crisis of Un-Narratibility: Romantic Love and Intertextual Fragments in Jeanette Winterson’s Novels**

In my presentation, I analyse the ways in which contemporary British writer Jeanette Winterson’s novels recycle cultural clichés of romantic love, canonized literary texts, and plot devices often included in popular romances (such as the love triangle or the ­happily-ever-after), creating a collage-like effect, centring around the implications of the possibility that there is nothing “new” to say about love. Situating my research within the field of critical love studies, I incorporate various theories of intertextuality, queer theory, body studies, and narratological approaches in my framework. Considering feminist debates around romantic love, the difficulties of definition, and its pervasiveness in consumer culture, my research project aims to focus on the crisis of romantic love in postmodern fiction. By tracing intertextual patterns of parodying, copying, quoting, and rewriting, I analyse Winterson’s genre-bending, sensual, and poetic oeuvre. Untangling this proliferation of intertexts brought in to capture the un-narratibility of love (for instance, biblical tales, Greek mythology, physics theory, medical discourse, magic realism, and medieval texts, lately even discourses on technology, artificial intelligence, and transhumanism), in my research, I investigate Winterson’s novels as a fragmented series of stories within stories: a patchwork of repetitions and interruptions. Her novels are shaped by fragmentary intertexts, which not only connect her fiction with a wide variety of intertextual sources but create an intriguing dialoguewithin the Wintersonian oeuvre, as the novels also quote from previous ones, recontextualizing ideas. Playing with imageries of (re)writing, reading, naming, and translating or even misreading and misinterpreting, Winterson’s novels stitch together several bodies of texts and discourses, creating love stories of mismatched yet interwoven parts.

**Keywords:** intertextuality, Jeanette Winterson, postmodern fiction, queer theory, romantic love

**Angelina Likhovid: Dehumanization and Political Propaganda in Ali Smith’s *Spring* (2018)**

Ali Smith’s sequence of novels called *Seasonal Quartet* (2016-2020) has received widespread academic recognition as an exposure of political lies, post-truth attitudes and the incitement of xenophobia associated with the Brexit Leave campaign. However, little attention has been paid to the specific (linguistic) devices that enable institutions of power to create a divisive discourse of political, social and immigration instability. *Spring* (2018), the third novel in Ali Smith’s state-of-the-nation *Quartet*, stands out of the sequence by paying particular attention to the anti-immigrant rhetoric of the (post) Brexit political landscape within the contemporary UK. In *Spring* politically motivated use of language makes it a tool for performing various forms of propaganda and dehumanization. In my analysis, I rely on Jason Stanley’s theory of propaganda and Janet McIntosh’s conceptualization of linguistic dehumanization. The propagandistic use of language exposed in the novel leads to the spread of demagoguery and othering of immigrant populations in the (post) Brexit era. The inhuman treatment of immigrants within the network of detainment centres is a result of dehumanization that, consequently, deprives both detainees and employees of subjectivity and agency. Finally, *Spring* offers an antidote to the politicized misuse of language in a form of faith in the power of language to tell stories, unite people and give voice to those who happen to be the victimized target of political discourse.

**Keywords:** *Spring*, dehumanization, propaganda

**Bio:** Angelina Likhovid is a first-year PhD student at the University of Debrecen. Her doctoral research focuses on contemporary British fiction and how it describes the condition of the UK. Angelina is interested in the topics of (post) Brexit, the immigration crisis, and the performativity of art.

**Maryem Ben Salem: Cruel Optimism and Resilience Discourse in the *A Court of Thorns and Rose* Series by Sarah J. Maas**

This study delves into the evolution of female heroism in 21st-century fantasy literature, scrutinizing it through the lens of postfeminism and Lauren Berlant's concept of 'cruel optimism'. Berlant challenges the pervasive myths of 'the happy ever after' and 'having it all', proposing that these fantasies often obstruct personal success. By recognizing the limitations of these fantasies, female heroes encounter a crucial impasse. This impasse emerges not as a barrier, but as a transformative space, facilitating the adjustment to loss and steering towards a more tangible and fulfilling reality. Central to this transformation is Catherine McDermott’s resilience discourse, which posits that self-actualization in female protagonists is achieved through their capacity to rewire trauma into endurance. This discourse is vividly illustrated in Sarah J. Maas’ "A Court of Thorns and Roses" series, where the protagonist, Feyre Archeron, epitomizes the resilient female hero. A human huntress thrust into a realm of faeries, Feyre endures trials that test her physical and psychological fortitude, emerging as a symbol of resilience and adaptability. This presentation argues that overcoming the allure of cruel optimism and cultivating resilience are not just survival strategies, but are integral to the redefinition of heroism in modern young adult fantasy literature. It asserts that the journey of characters like Feyre Archeron is emblematic of a broader narrative shift, reflecting evolving societal attitudes towards female agency and success.

**Keywords:** Young Adult Fiction, Female Heroism, Cruel Optimism, Resilience discourse, *A Court of Thorns and Roses Series*.

**Bio:** Maryem Ben Salem is a 1st Year PhD student at the North American Studies program at the University of Debrecen. She specializes in Female Heroism in Young Adult Fiction and Fantasy and her academic interests include gender studies, posthumanism, and pop culture.

**Gergely Nagy: Authenticity and Immersion in Rockstar Games’ *Red Dead Redemption 2***

Rockstar Games’ game of 2018 is widely considered to be their greatest achievement in terms of creating a game that feels lived in with a huge sandbox to play in but also a personal odyssey to live through. *Red Dead Redemption 2* (*RDR2*) is essentially two games in one: a narrative driven story of a gang of outlaws on their last legs, and an open world simulation that lets the player engage with an expansive and often life-like environment where they get to survive off the land, recreating a Wild West frontier facsimile of that which was quickly diminishing by the late 1800s, the era in which the game is set. This presentation will focus on how Rockstar managed to recreate a piece of American historical setting authentically and accurately, relying on Iain Donald’s and Andrew Reid’s “The Wild West: Accuracy, Authenticity and Gameplay in Red Dead Redemption 2”, as well as Esther Wright’s “Rockstar Games and American History” and Sören Schoppmeier’s “Playing American”, the latter two on the first instalment of the game which already contained some of these elements. With the authentic elements in place, I argue, the players can achieve better immersion in the ludic environment.

**Keywords:** Video Games, Authenticity, Immersion, *Red Dead redemption 2*

**Bio:** Gergely Nagy is a second year MA student at the University of Debrecen with ongoing research in Westerns and Eastwood’s filmography.

**Mohammadreza Golshani: The Aesthetic Tapestry of Political Intrigue: Analyzing Visual Elements in the Narrative of *The Cat and the Coup***

*The Cat and the Coup* (2011) is a brief interactive game developed by Kurosh ValaNejad and Peter Brinson which invites players to the world of Mohammad Mosaddegh, the renowned Iranian prime minister who gained recognition for his efforts in nationalizing the oil industry in 1950s, in the form of microhistory. The game offers a distinct perspective by allowing players to assume the role of Mosaddegh's cat, which symbolizes Iran itself as a matter of its political borders in a 2D image, and using the Persian miniature drawings as the game’s background. These stylish choices provide a novel approach to examining political, historical, and cultural aspects. This analysis diverges from previous studies by focusing on the game's visual elements rather than its documentary history storytelling implications. This paper aims to demonstrate how the game uses artistic taste not merely to tell a story to international players but to acquaint them with the rich art and culture of Iran. By deconstructing each visual choice, this paper reveals both their literal and metaphorical meanings in the game world. The analysis focuses on how *The Cat and the Coup* transcends traditional historical narratives, transforming the game into a cultural exposition. It also demonstrates how these visuals function as a bridge, effectively communicating the essence of Mosaddegh's life and contributions. The research offers insights for intercultural research community seeking how to represent Iran in a way that challenges media stereotypes. By showcasing the effectiveness of *The Cat and the Coup* in merging documentary storytelling with captivating aesthetics, the research encourages exploration of similar approaches in artistic endeavors.

**Keywords:** *The Cat in the Coup*, Mohammad Mosaddegh, Microhistory, Iran, Tapestry, Miniature

**Bio:** Ph.D. Student, University of Debrecen

**Grant William Currier: Speak Of the Devil: A Lingua-Relational Approach to the First-Year College Composition Classroom**

Stressing the performative nature of language neglects an aspect of language that can be of significance to our classrooms and the lives of our students: the relational mode of language. In this essay, intended not exclusively for the First-Year Composition Classroom, I offer a cursory and reflective investigation into language as simultaneously performative, constitutive, and relational. I argue the three are co-transformational for each particular utterance and utterance-toward (response(s) to). For these, I draw primarily on Bakhtin, Taylor, and Micciche. This paper’s aim is not primarily theoretical but practical, offering a rudimentary sample lesson plan that positions students via discussion prompts toward this tri-perspectival view of language. This offered view, as a mode of collectivity, has implications for numerous pedagogies including but not limited to restorative justice, contemplative, and emotive. I seek, then, to investigate how silence might be cultivated into a classroom conversation of diverse pedagogy as a means of space-making. This space, I argue, is the physical classroom, transformed into a place where the other is dignified not as stranger but as sui generis.

**Keywords:** performative language, constitutive language, relationality, Bakhtin, Micciche, pedagogy, composition, conversation, lectio divina.

**Bio:** PhD — English, Oklahoma State University grant.currier@okstate.edu

**Kiyotaka Sueyoshi: Whitman’s Prairie Ordinance: Forging Intergenerational Memories**

This study is about the relationship between Whitman’s poetics and politics with attention to the term “odor” in “The Prairie-Grass Dividing.” The first line of the poem – “THE prairie-grass dividing – its special odor breathing” – is added at the final stage of poetization, and what follows is what spiritually corresponds with the prairie, namely how to behave in “inland America.” I propose that Whitman’s employment of “odor” is doubly unique; firstly it is not vision but olfaction, and secondly, it is not “air” but “odor.” The employment of “odor” extends to the meaning of the term “dividing,” which concerns both the prairie’s geography and its extraction of America’s essence. Furthermore, that olfaction is the sense of emotion and memory explains Whitman’s choice of olfaction as the modality. In the poem, Whitman enumerates the events of self-government as if the Founding spirit – like the one in *the Declaration of Independence* – is transported: for instance, “Those that go their own gait, erect, stepping with freedom and command – leading, not following.” But these events are both analepsis and prolepsis, i.e., not only “evoked” but also “demanded” in the prairie, a still vast grassland. This relates to Whitman’s temporal perception; he said that “Past and present and future are not disjoined but joined.” Whitman is forging the intergenerational memories, and the term “odor” plays a key role both in expressing the essence of America – the prairie – and in signifying the memory – what corresponds with it. “The Prairie-Grass Dividing” is the poem of Whitman’s prairie ordinance.

**Keywords:** Olfaction, politics, Whitman

**Bio:** Ph.D. and graduate of Literary and Cultural Studies at the University of Szeged, Kiyotaka Sueyoshi is an Americanist specializing in 19 th -century literature and history, especially the interdisciplinary textual analysis of American literature. His doctoral dissertation is “Walt Whitman’s poetic-political experiment: Jeffersonian Whitman and Whitman’s olfactory tropes.”

**Dávid Papp: Event Horizon: How Can We Know Barbie from Barbenheimer?**

The 21st of July in 2023 became a marked day in the calendars of film lovers and meme enthusiasts alike. Denoting the premier day of two highly anticipated films, the *Barbie* and *Oppenheimer* movies, news of the double release date rapidly gained traction in several online communities giving birth to the Barbenheimer phenomena. One of the phenomena’s integral elements consisted of the creation, propagation, and enjoyment of Barbenheimer memes that played off of the perceived differences between the two titles. While the “Barbenheimer fever” was crowned “movie event of the year” by Variety magazine and Barbenheimer memes attained great popularity in their social media spheres, this paper argues that the most crucial shifts occurred only in the wake of the phenomena’s end. After the dual premiers, critics did not hesitate to respond but first among them were those on the far ends of the political spectrum, bashing and praising the two titles according to their political agenda. This seriously impacted the structuration of the surrounding discourse which, I argue, misses the chief element: the artworks themselves. This paper theorises that an ever mounting ‘discursive pressure’ causes the artwork to figuratively implode, thus creating an event horizon that renders it nearly imperceptible. Meanwhile, on the event horizon, memes outcompete other more complex narratives leading to a constellation, in which memes structure the public discourse of artworks and events leading to a new iteration of the hermeneutic problem: an impossibility of encountering the artwork.

**Keywords:** memes, Barbie, hermeneutics, phenomenology

**Bio**: Dávid Papp is a first year PhD. student at the Doctoral School of Literary and Cultural Studies at the University of Debrecen. His main field of interest is literature theory and philosophy, focusing on the structural position of memes in contemporary media.

**Eszter Láncos: Images of Lament: From Ancient Greece to Early Modern England Shakespeare’s Venus and Adonis**

The approach with which this presentation approaches images is built on the theories of Aby Warburg, Hans Belting and W. J. T Mitchell. Warburg’s *Bilderatlas Mnemosyne,* displaying black and white photographs on 63 large wooden panels,represented his explorations of how and why Antique images and gestures with symbolic meaning repeatedly reappeared in different artworks until modern times. Mitchell, among other things, emphasised that not only graphic or optical images are the so-called “image ‘proper’” [[1]](#footnote-1) but verbal and mental images as well. Belting understood images as “nomads” that “take residence in one medium after another.”[[2]](#footnote-2) In the heart of my analysis of images of lament is Shakespeare’s epyllion, *Venus and Adonis.* The poem has been praised for its erotic and humorous qualities since its first publication in 1593, although, with time, critical interest turned towards its darker themes. Of the poem’s 1194 lines, it is the last 165 lines that focus on the dead Adonis, closing his quest to achieve *kleos*, immortal fame through being a hero. We get a vivid description of his corpse, ripped open by the boar’s tusk, and covered with gore, and also the process through which his body is “melted like a vapour” to give place to a flower growing from his blood. This presentation, however, puts not the dead Adonis but the mourning Venus and her struggle to accept her lover’s death under the lens. It concentrates on the goddess’ loss, that is, on “feminine suffering” and not on "masculine commemoration."[[3]](#footnote-3) It examines Venus’ words and gestures throughout her lament in the context of Ancient Greek funerary ritual and the Adonis cult.

**Keywords:** iconology, Shakespeare, lament

**Bio**: Eszter Láncos is in the final year of her PhD studies at the Doctoral School of Literary Studies atPázmány Péter Catholic University, researching the iconology of love and death in early modernliterature and art, with special regard to Shakespeare’s Venus and Adonis. She received her MAin English Language and Literature at the Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church.

**Bálint Szántó: Transmedia Narratives in American Cinema**

The current working title of my doctoral research project is “Transmedia Narratives in American Cinema”. In my dissertation, I am going to analyze the rapidly transforming ways of engaging with narratives in the 21st century. Transmedia storytelling, according to media scholar Henry Jenkins, is the way of storytelling in which a fictional world is built through several forms of media, including films, animated series, novels, comics, and webcomics. Some of the most prominent contemporary examples of this are *Star Wars* and Marvel. One of the main questions of my research is the question of canonicity and authorship. Can we look at transmedial additions to these storyworlds as honest representations of artistic intention, or are they merely profit-oriented creations of mass media industry? Who determines the canonicity of the elements in a transmedia narrative? Is the concept of canon even relevant in this participatory culture where everyone is able to construct their own personal interpretations, canons, remixes? How do grassroots products like fanfiction, fan art, and “bootleg” transmedial additions shape this discourse? The other pillar of my research is comics studies. We currently live in a time where comic book movie adaptations are dominating cinema and popular culture. In my dissertation, I am going to argue that it is not only the characters and the stories that have been adapted, but also their aesthetic style, mixing of verbal and visual elements, storytelling structure, perception of time, collaborative relationship with fans, and tendency for reboots, retellings, and crossovers.

**Keywords:** transmediality, fandom, comics

**Bio**: Bálint Szántó is a third-year PhD student in the Literatures and Cultures in English program at the University of Szeged, Hungary. His research interests include new media studies, fandom studies, comics studies, and fantasy and sci-fi literature. He is currently teaching a course about comics at the university.

**Fruzsina Balázs: Hopeful Horrors: Dystopian Representation of Children in Colm McCarthy’s *The Girl with All the Gifts* (2016)**

In response to the series of global crises experienced in the 21st century including climate change, wars, terrorist attacks, and a global pandemic, dystopian cinema as well as its academic study have become rather popular within the last few decades. Belonging to the subgenre of infection or zombie films, Colm McCarthy’s *The Girl with All the Gifts* (2016) has also experienced a revival of attention in light of the recent coronavirus outbreak. However, while the regarding discourses address various socio-political issues, there is little focus on analysing the child figure itself. The film’s layered representation of the “hybrid children” as the symbol of hope and as uncanny monsters who eat human flesh is crucial to investigate since it reveals the shifting of traditional roles and dynamics between children and adults, the resilience of youth, and the vulnerabilities inherent in a world distorted by a global catastrophe. Drawing on Patricia Kennon’s evaluation of the fundamentally ambivalent quality of the child figure in dystopian narratives and Tamar Granot’s study on children’s experience of loss and trauma, my research claims that, through the rewriting of the classic zombie narrative, *The Girl with All the Gifts* creates complex, even paradoxical depictions of children, portraying them as both the symbol of destruction and the hope of survival. By doing so, the film also provides a mirror to the moral and ethical dimensions of scientific advancement, the changing boundaries between youth and adulthood, and the negotiation of power dynamics within the disrupted social frameworks of our time.

**Keywords:** dystopia, child figure, zombie, contagion, 21st century, *The Girl with All the Gifts*

**Bio**: Fruzsina Balázs is a first-year student at the Doctoral School of Literary and Cultural Studies, University of Debrecen. Her research explores the representation of children and young adults in 21st-century dystopian films. Fruzsina is interested in child symbolism, post-apocalyptic societies, and the transformation of child-adult power relations in dystopian settings.

**Ayoub Al-Rawashdeh: The Challenges to Authentic Representation of Bedouin Culture in *Theeb* (Naji Abo Nowar, 2014)**

Evidently, once a film is considered authentic in its cultural representation, it is destined to a default success in terms of the story it tells. However, what lies behind that success is conceivably concerning. Naji Abu Nowar’s Oscar-nominated Jordanian film, *Theeb* (2014), offers a great opportunity to analyse the radicality which an authentic representation approach can result to and be possibly imperilling to similar productions of cinema and television. *Theeb* faced unexpected challenge with being thoroughly authentic in its representation of the Bedouin culture. Such challenges were experienced specifically in its production and writing process. The creative writing process of several contemporary films could be undermined and jeopardised by being limited through being put in a box of authentic elements that cannot be overlooked due to the loyalty of the filmmakers to their authentic approach to representing a culture. In his efforts to pursue an accurate authentic representation, Abo Nowar cast Bedouin individuals and trained them for months to be able to play the film’s characters to empower its authentic approach. Nonetheless, those efforts which he devoted fired back at him when the Bedouin cast had a condition for participating in the film which was to not include any female character. Therefore, Abo Nowar had to compromise the feminine element in *Theeb* to win over the authentic nature that is majorly represented in the Bedouin cast. Utilising published interviews of Naji Abu Nowar and *Theeb*’s reviews, this study analyses the notion of the challenging side of authentic representation of cultures.

**Keywords:** Authenticity, Bedouin, Representation of culture, *Theeb*

**Bio:** Ayoub Al-Rawashdeh is a first-year PhD student at University of Debrecen. He has been a member of IEAS for two and a half years, as he finished his MA at the same institute. His academic interests include cultural representation in film, the auteur theory, and Postcolonial Cinema, especially, transnational and Third Cinemas.

**Olga Kajtár-Pinjung : The United States of America vs. Guantánamo Bay: Stages of Enmification and Self-Fashioning**

Present dissertation project analyzes the elements of self-fashioning and enemy image construction in the memoirs of former Guantánamo Bay detainees, *Guantánamo Diary* (2015) written by Mohamedou Ould Slahi, Mansoor Adayfi’s *Don’t Forget Us Here* (2021), and the legislative decisions of the Bush, Trump, Obama, and Biden Administrations. This presentation aims to contextualize the topic of enmification and analyze political and legal discourse with the purpose of identifying the trends and changes in the enemy image construction of Guantánamo Bay detainees carried out by the different administrations. Following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the notion of the United States being the leader of the world has become even more emphasized and it assumed an even stronger sense of responsibility in leadership on the global stage, further strengthening American exceptionalism. On the one hand, the research examines presidential speeches, executive orders, legal decisions, and laws to establish the timeline of enemy image constructing methods used by the government in order to explore and reveal the role of legislative measures in the enmification of the detainees. On the other hand, the project analyzes the memoirs of Mohamedou Ould Slahi and Mansoor Adayfi who spent nearly fifteen years at Guantánamo Bay without ever being charged with a crime. Their stories and the way they perceive, describe their own situation and fashion their image of the self, provide a fascinating and necessary counterbalance to enemy image construction.

**Keywords:** enmification, self-fashioning, Guantánamo Bay

**Bio:** Olga Kajtár-Pinjung is a PhD student in the English and American Literatures and Cultures doctoral program at the University of Szeged, Hungary. Her dissertation focuses on the elements of self-fashioning and enemy image construction of former Guantánamo Bay detainees.

**Patrick Leech: Üdvözöljük az Egyesült Államokban: A Hungarian Diaspora Response to the Hungarian Refugee Crisis, 1956-1957**

This paper investigates the response of the Hungarian diaspora to efforts by the US government to transport, process, and resettle over 38,000 Hungarian refugees and parolees in the months immediately following the failed uprising by drawing upon a collection of Hungarian-language diaspora newspapers. The diaspora community would serve two critical functions during this process: translation and integration. These publications provide insights into the recruitment of Hungarian speakers, and the broader Hungarian diaspora, to participate in the processing, resettlement, and integration of newly arrived Hungarian refugees and parolees. As such, this paper reveals how local communities participated in national policy initiatives while also showing how US foreign policies affected domestic communities.This paper comes from the first section of my dissertation which explores the response of the US-based Hungarian diaspora to the 1956 Revolution and refugee crisis including reactions, relief efforts, and participation in refugee resettlement. Later sections will then examine the integration of the ‘56ers into the diaspora community and the role the Cold War arrivals played in shaping political activism. Throughout the project I examine how diaspora leaders, publishers, and others participated in Cold War conversations to shape local, national, and international perceptions and policies particularly related to Hungary.

**Keywords:** diaspora, Hungarian-American community, Cold War

**Bio**: Patrick is a History PhD Candidate at Baylor University and a Fulbright Student researcher inBudapest. His dissertation, “Hungarians Over Here: Diaspora, Refugees, and US Cold WarPolitics,” considers how the Hungarian American diaspora participated in a global Cold War byexamining their work resettling refugees from the 1956 Revolution.

**Sándor Kiss: Maintaining Hegemony and the Right to Develop: American Sentiments Regarding the Kyoto Protocol**

My research explores the political processes and defining sentiments within the United States concerning the Kyoto Protocol. By the mid-1990s the growing global concern over climate change needed an urgent political response. The Kyoto Protocol, crafted by the United Nations was seen as an imperfect but necessary measure to demonstrate the commitment of the international community to address anthropogenic pollution, primarily greenhouse gas emissions. The developing, but rapidly emerging economies, most importantly China and India advocated for special concessions within the protocol, contending that they have the same right to pollute while developing as the countries of the Global North had decades before. This implied that while developing countries would benefit from the exemptions, developed countries would need to impose restrictions on their own economies, potentially diminishing their competitiveness on the global market and thus their hegemony. My research examines how the political forces in the United States handled the Kyoto Protocol and how it led to the resurgence of environmental skepticism that characterized the early 1980s. I also intend to explore how President Clinton and George W. Bush used the Kyoto issue for their own political gain, despite the fact that the Byrd-Hagel Resolution showed a political unity in opposing the Kyoto Protocol’s exemptions.

**Keywords:** Kyoto Protocol, Climate Change, United States, Environmental Politics

**Bio**: Sándor Kiss is a PhD candidate in the North-American Literature and Cultural Study Programme at the University of Debrecen and an assistant lecturer at the Institute of English Language and Culture at the University of Nyíregyháza. His field of research is environmental policy and environmentalism in the U.S., its current state, and its relationship with contemporary political trends and the new media.

1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)