



The 2nd Student Conference on

“LITERATURES IN ENGLISH”

10.05.2024

**Literatures in English
Book of Abstracts**

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Acknowledgement

We extend our deepest gratitude to Prof. Dr. Celalettin Vatandaş, the Dean of the Faculty of Science and Letters, for his invaluable support in making this conference a reality.

Our heartfelt appreciation goes out to the organising committee for their tireless efforts and dedication throughout the paper selection process.

We sincerely thank the session chairs for their precise management of the panels and their insightful commentary on each session.

Special thanks are extended to our dedicated volunteering team, including Çağlayan Adak, Bircan Esen, Vlera Haxhibeqiri, Hatice Karaul, Hasan Ömer Coşkun, Tuğçe Eker, Deniz Eren Güdük, İlayda Çağlar, Sude Özdemir whose unwavering commitment was essential in bringing this conference to fruition.

PRESENTATIONS IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

Vampire Plagues and Hunters in Balkan: Analysis of Baron Vordenburg in *Carmilla* via Fatwa and Historical Accounts

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Abstract

Different cultural contexts encompass distinctive tales of creatures characterized as blood-sucking supernatural entities. With respect to these characteristics, the Balkan region points to a notably deep-rooted lineage of vampire myths. The vampire belief holds significance not solely by virtue of its capacity to provoke migrations within Balkan villages, but also due to its function as a catalyst propelling the rise of literary innovation. In this specific geographical domain, a cadre of individuals specializing in the pursuit of vampires once possessed official endorsements from the ruling powers, and they were assigned to eradicate the detrimental outcome of vampiric actions. From this perspective, the importance attributed to the persona of Baron Vordenburg in Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla* (1872) gains emphasis due to his characterization as a vampire hunter. Furthermore, the methodologies employed by Baron Vordenburg for the detection and neutralization of vampire graves parallel those practices of Ottoman vampire hunters within the Balkan region historically. With a specific focus on this character in *Carmilla* (1872), this presentation aims to examine the impact of historical narratives and superstitious folkloric beliefs on English literature. In line with this purpose, the character of Baron Vordenburg will be studied through a comparative analysis, drawing parallels with the vampire-related fatwas (Islamic principles/laws) issued by Ebüssuûd Efendi, the religious authority of the 16th-century Ottoman Empire.

Keywords: Vampire, Hunter, Balkan, Folklore, *Carmilla* (1872)

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An Analysis of Martin Dysart’s “Normal” Through His Career in *Equus* by Peter Shaffer

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Abstract

The world we live in is another acting scene for all the people who truly experience life itself, while the stages of theatres are a portal of history. Human emotions, thoughts, experiences, identities, and the philosophy of literature incarnate on the stage, starting from the Aristotelian tragedies to the present time. There was a time when Brechtian/Epic drama became the contemporary literature for British theatre in the 1920s. Brechtian/Epic drama is a unique theatrical style that highlights a sense of detachment from the narrative, delves into historical and societal themes, and prompts the audience to think critically and cultivate a deeper political awareness. Fifty years later, Peter Levin Shaffer, a renowned playwright, created one of the most significant theatrical works, *Equus* (1973). *Equus*, which explores the story of a 17-year-old stable boy, Alan Strang, perhaps owes much to Brechtian drama. To explore psychiatry in those times, Shaffer creates the character Martin Dysart who accepts Alan Strang as a patient. The development of Dysart’s career shows his “normal” view of his profession, and it enables him to observe the changes in his identity. This analysis, therefore, aims to explore Martin Dysart’s “normal” in the play, as a psychiatrist who is interested in unique patients, and as one who questions if their mental state is worthy of curing.

Keywords: Brechtian drama, *Equus*, identity, the “normal”, Martin Dysart

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Unravelling the Postmodern Absurdity in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* by Tom Stoppard

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Abstract

Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* is a postmodernist play which challenges traditional ideas of identity, reality, and existence. This analysis focuses on the play's postmodern aspects, including metafiction, intertextuality, and deconstruction, which blur the lines between fiction and reality, and question the nature of human existence. By pushing the audience into a world where characters question their condition as fictional characters within Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Stoppard explores the constructed nature of narrative and the fluidity of the characters' identity. The play's use of intertextuality and references to various literary and philosophical works further deconstructs traditional narratives, highlighting the interconnectedness of human experiences across time. It aligns with the absurdist tradition in its exploration of existential dilemmas, reflecting the absurdity of the human condition. Furthermore, Stoppard's intellectual playfulness marks it as distinctly a postmodern play. It transcends mere existential angst by inviting audiences to engage in a playful yet profound examination of reality. It challenges conventional narratives and fixed notions of truth and identity, encouraging audiences to embrace uncertainty and the paradoxical nature of existence in a fragmented world.

Key Words: Absurdity, Tom Stoppard, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, Postmodern Theatre, Intertextuality, Deconstruction

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Bella Baxter from *Poor Things* as the New Frankenstein's Monster

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Abstract

The last movie produced by the much-praised and controversial director Yorgos Lanthimos, *Poor Things* tells the story of Bella Baxter, the “adopted” daughter of Godwin Baxter, whom I will argue to be an alternative version of Frankenstein's Monster. Godwin is a successful surgeon in London during a reimagined – or simply perceived as such in Bella’s intricate point of view – Victorian era. The manner of her reanimation and following course of events shares striking parallels with Frankenstein’s Monster, whether it be with their interactions with other people, the world, or most of all the existential nature of both characters’ questions. Bearing in mind the reason why Frankenstein created his Monster in the first place, the movie develops the idea of “making a person by unconventional means” and further explores how an improved “Monster” would be treated in the world. Thanks to her favourable appearance, Bella gets to experience what her predecessor never could, which sets the base for objective social commentary. This creates an entirely new dimension in the storyline, making it possible to question what is humane about humanity, and how would the cultural and sexual norms of the world would be viewed with eyes unclouded by formulaic teachings. By putting these aspects of the film under inspection, I believe we will uncover much regarding different approaches to human nature, as well as how primal senses and instincts play a role in our daily lives and relations. In a nutshell, the subject will cover the parallels and differences between Frankenstein’s Monster and Bella Baxter’s storyline, and how the discrepancy of their fates is caused by society’s conventions and not their inherent nature.

Keywords: Monster, Perception, Love, Humanity, Society.

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An Analysis of the Women Characters in William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* from a Feminist Perspective

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Abstract

William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is a timeless tragedy that portrays the complexities of human nature, politics, and existential questions. The roles of the play's female characters, Ophelia and Gertrude, stand out as key elements in comprehending the dynamics of the narrative within its intricate structures, themes and personalities. This analysis focuses on exploring the multifaceted portrayals of Ophelia and Gertrude, by examining their relationships with Hamlet, their individual aspects, and the societal constraints that shape their actions and fates. Moreover, this study uses a feminist perspective to examine the details of Ophelia and Gertrude's personalities, by focusing on how they act within the system of the patriarchy, their role as antagonists in Hamlet's character development, and the ways in which their experiences speak to the more general themes of power, love, madness, and mortality. Through a close examination of the key scenes and interactions involving Ophelia and Gertrude, this analysis aims to illuminate their inner struggles, desires, and the impact of the male-dominated social norms on their identities and choices. Finally, this study takes into consideration the historical contexts and critical interpretations to provide an extensive understanding of Ophelia and Gertrude as representative characters in Shakespearean drama. It highlights the importance of these female characters in literature and feminist discourse by transcending their roles beyond simple archetypes and expanding our understanding of their significance in creating the thematic variety and dramatic tension within Shakespeare's play.

Keywords: William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Women Characters, Feminist Criticism, Patriarchy

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Primaeval to Contemporary Exemplifications of Deception as a Feminine Quality in Literature

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Abstract

From the portrayals of the goddesses and heroines to personifications of universal concepts prevalent in the lives of even the most seemingly unrelated people, women have been put into innumerable states and circumstances. One of the prevalent aspects of these occurrences is the negative attribution of deception and ‘trickery’ to femininity. This concept seems to be present in numerous mythological figures, including Western Religion, literature from various periods, and up until early contemporary cinema. The quality of these states and occurrences were, expectedly, closely related to society’s demands and judgments on women. The primary emphasis will be put upon characters from various periods and genres of English Literature. One such period is the Victorian era, where the defiance against the social roles imposed upon women added to unwelcome repercussions in terms of representation. The majority of the presentation will revolve around appropriate exemplification and the contrast of intercultural literary figures, who have been associated with the Jungian archetype the Trickster, such as Loki, Lilith, and the characters that fall under the Femme Fatale trope. The aim here is to reduce the stigma that revolves around women and put them under a spotlight that is much more objective by exposing this phenomenon of femininity that seems to be closely woven with the Trickster.

Keywords: Women, Femininity, Archetype, The Trickster, Femme Fatale

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Body Snatching in Britain During the 19th Century

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Abstract

Anatomy is one of the oldest fields in medicine. Throughout history, many cultures had different ideas and practices about human dissection. It has been banned or popularized from time to time. However, most of the main developments in anatomy and physiology took place in the 18th and 19th centuries, as in many other fields. Due to expanding studies in anatomy and medicine, demand for corpses was rapidly increasing. Surgeons and doctors needed fresh bodies to perform dissection in classes. However, the only bodies available were those of executed criminals (by Murder Act 1752) or those who committed suicide. Moreover, the number of executions was reduced by the Death Act in 1832. Therefore, a marketplace emerged for bodies to use in anatomical fields. People started grave robbing to sell cadavers to doctors for a good fee. Some took it a step further and murdered people to sell fresh cadavers to doctors and make profit. This continued until the passage of the Anatomy Act in 1832. This situation created many issues such as moral dilemmas and in addition, influenced many authors (Charles Dickens, Robert Louis Stevenson etc.). Robert Louis Stevenson's story *Body Snatcher* is a good example that displays moral dilemmas and ethical questions during its time about this subject. This presentation discusses the moral dilemma, ethics in science and the condition of the medical field during that period through Stevenson's *Body Snatcher*.

Keywords: Grave Robbing, Resurrectionist, Body Snatching, Dissection, 19th-century

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Literary Manifestations of Depression and Suicide: Sylvia Plath's Mad Girl's Love Song and The Rabbit Catcher

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Abstract

Sylvia Plath (1932-1963) was a confessional poet and writer, one of the most prominent female literary voices of the 20th century, with her, identity turbulent feelings issues, and psychiatric difficulties that may be attributed to the time and society she lived in. Since poetry is more emotion-focused than other genres, it is shorter than other literary works and is a piece of writing in which the poets swiftly create and express feelings and mood swings, they experience sentiments more profoundly and this can be a heavy experience each time for their mental health. Plath's awareness of her deteriorating mental health and prior suicide attempt distinguished her from other suicidal writers. The path between Plath's pen and mind both brought her into being and, as she expressed herself and produced contrasts in her mind, took her closer to death, admired death, and eventually, death became one with her deepening despair. Plath is in the dark; she prefers dark themes and enjoys them in certain ways in her poetry. This presentation will examine how Plath reflects on her difficult road to her death in her words by analyzing selected poems written at the beginning of her career and before her suicide. The first section will focus on Sylvia Plath's early poem, *Mad Girl's Love Song*, composed while she was a student at Smith College. The themes, tone, and literary characteristics of Plath's writing in the early 20s will be examined in the context of this poem and how it deals with the unpleasant emotions and sensations linked with depression, death, and suicide. In the second section, the poem *The Rabbit Catcher* is chosen which was written close to the author's death. It is vital to observe the author's sadness and suicidal impulses mirrored in her poetry right before her death.

Keywords: Sylvia Plath, Confessional Poetry, Female Literary Voice, Suicide, Depression

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Interwoven Spirits: Ecocritical Insights into Joy Harjo’s Poetry of Nature and Self-Discovery

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Abstract

Joy Harjo, celebrated as the first Native American Poet Laureate of the United States, was born in 1951 in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Her distinguished body of work, including *In Mad Love and War* (1990), *An American Sunrise* (2019), and *Weaving Sundown in a Scarlet Light: Fifty Poems for Fifty Years* (2022), reflects her deep connection with nature, drawing from her indigenous heritage. This connection is not merely thematic but functions as a profound exploration of the interdependence between humanity and the natural world. Harjo’s poetry suggests that nature is a vital pathway to understanding our inner selves and achieving a harmonious balance with the universe. In this context, ecocriticism offers a compelling theoretical framework for analysing Harjo’s work. Ecocriticism examines the relationship between literature and the environment, and emphasises the cultural and political dimensions of human interactions with nature. This paper therefore proposes to apply an ecocritical lens to Harjo’s poetic oeuvre, particularly focusing on *Remember* (1982), *Eagle Poem* (1990), and *Talking with The Sun* (2006). This will help reveal how Harjo’s integration of natural imagery and indigenous ecological knowledge critiques environmental exploitation and advocates for a more reciprocal and respectful relationship with the earth, which facilitates a deeper understanding of self, community, and the planet and challenges readers to reconsider their role within the natural world.

Keywords: Ecocriticism, Nature, Humanity, Spirituality, Self-discovery, Joy Harjo

⁹ I am Serdzhan Ibryam Hasan and I am originally from Bulgaria. I am deeply interested in language, literature, and related fields. Besides my main studies, I also enjoy learning languages like French and Russian, as well as exploring art history. I look forward to engaging in scholarly discourse, exchanging ideas, and furthering my academic growth in the process.

Reflections of the Human Psyche: A Comparison of "The Panther" by Rainer Maria Rilke and "I Felt a Funeral, in My Brain" by Emily Dickinson

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Abstract

According to Edward S. Reed, the human psyche embodies the complex interplay of internal forces that shape individuals' cognition, behaviour, and personality, thereby altering their perception and response to both external stimuli and internal reflections. Hence, within the realm of literature, each written work inherently bears the imprint of its creator's psyche, manifesting distinct characteristics that offer insights into the author's innermost dynamics. This study, therefore, delves into the intricate reflections of the human psyche as portrayed in the poetry of two renowned literary figures—Rainer Maria Rilke and Emily Dickinson. Through an examination of Rilke's "The Panther" and Dickinson's "I Felt a Funeral, in My Brain," this study attempts to uncover the complexities of human consciousness depicted in their respective works. By exploring subject matters such as distorted perception, confinement and the dynamic relationship between the observer and the observed, this analysis seeks to illuminate the profound insights these poets offer into human experience. Rilke's evocative imagery of a captive panther and Dickinson's introspective journey into the depths of psychological turmoil provide fertile grounds for understanding the intricacies of the human mind.

Keywords: Emily Dickinson, Rainer Maria Rilke, Psyche, Confinement, Distorted Perception

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Constructing Artistic Agency: Creative Endeavour and Time in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*, *To The Lighthouse*, and *The Waves*

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Abstract

The present study examines the ways in which the artist figure receives intellectual treatment in Virginia Woolf's stream-of-consciousness novels: *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), *To The Lighthouse* (1927), and *The Waves* (1931), in which the author formulates the creative endeavour as encompassing individual strife as well as the broader themes of perspectivism, temporal experience of the duration of time, and the general human condition. Through philosophical reflections, phenomenology of time in Woolf's representation of the creative act, in general, and the creative individual, in particular, emerges as a central means of rendering the relationship between self and the work of art, as well as its attainment of symbolic value. Consequently, this study aims to uncover both psychological and operative variations in the artistic figures of the three novels. Drawing on the duality of the subjective perception of time and self as well as the monumental setting in which the artist figures concomitantly exist, the present study utilises namely Henri Bergson's notion of *durée*, Martin Heidegger's concept of Being, and Otto Rank's psychoanalytical findings on the relationship between art, artist, and the creative act.

Keywords: Art and artist, Temporality, Being, Virginia Woolf, Stream-of-consciousness

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An Analysis of Gender Roles in *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe

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Abstract

Throughout the ages, the position of women in societies has been downtrodden by those who dictate over their communities. Although for the last 150 years, the rights of women have been largely improved, the struggle of women in the socio-political and economic realms maintains its condition. At the root of their sufferings lies the patriarchal system, as the majority of societies, whether primitive or not, are still dictated by male individuals. Social constructs put limitations on the roles of women, and as a result of their subordination to male individuals, they become confined to certain household occupations such as cooking, cleaning, and childbearing. As a milestone of African and Postcolonial literature, Chinua Achebe's novel *Things Fall Apart* presents the fundamental, "building stones" of the Nigerian Igbo Communities' domestic culture and tradition. Although women are an indispensable part of any community, their social position is under the control of their husbands and fathers in this novel as in real life. In this sense, making decisions about women's lives belongs to oppressive men, and women do not have any right to express any feelings or ideas over males' decisions. Their roles and occupations are realistically demonstrated by the author, as being in an inferior position in the Igbo society. There are fragmented and distorted perceptions regarding female and male roles, whereby being a female is seen as a weakness, and it is accepted as a humiliation. In the Igbo society, gender roles are divided into two by categorizing the feminine and masculine. Therefore, the main purpose of this presentation is to discuss the female and male presence in the Igbo community and the social expectations that appear to be preeminent in Chinua Achebe's novel.

Keywords: Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Postcolonial Literature, Women, Gender Roles

¹² Meryem Öztürk was born in 2000 in Kocaeli. She is a fourth-year undergraduate student in the Department of Western Languages and Literatures at Kırklareli University, English Language and Literature Program.

An Analysis of the Poem “Negro” by Langston Hughes from a Marxist Perspective

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Abstract

In 1991, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, it was believed that the adherent ideologies and systems of authority had also vanished into the dusty pages of history. Marxist theory, which was one of the dominant and eminent theories that pervaded the realm of academia from the East to the West, was considered to be losing its validity. However, even when one looks at the scholarly body of work shared by digital and online platforms, it may be understood that Marxist-related academic writings have been on the rise, and the academic community still sympathizes with Marxism. The reason why Marxism does not disappear is its systematic approach, in which one of the main principles is to provide prosperity, equality, and education to people, and its potential to subvert the world order in the existing class struggle problem. The re-emergence of Marxist theory and its increasing emphasis is, in fact, an indicator of a sociological problem existing in society. Marxism did not come forward directly as a method of literary analysis, yet it was introduced by the academic circles to literary theory and criticism. From this vantage point, an analysis of the poem “Negro” by Langston Hughes in the light of Marxist literary theory will follow a set of questions that will attempt to unravel the established class structures, the characters or groups that control the economic means of production, the class conflicts exhibited, the characters that are oppressed, the social classes they belong, the oppressors and the representatives of the status quo. Furthermore, this study will focus on whether Hughes’ work suggests a solution to society's class conflicts while exposing the members of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. This specific poem includes Marxist visions, in which the poet portrays the social status of the working class under the title “Negro”. Therefore, this presentation aims to analyze Hughes’ poem specifically in the light of Marxist critical literary theory.

Key Words: Marxism, Langston Hughes, Negro, Class, Proletariat, Bourgeoisie

¹³ Deniz Ulaş Polat was born in 2001 in Bursa. He is a fourth-year undergraduate student in the Department of Western Languages and Literatures at Kırklareli University, English Language and Literature Program.

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* through the Queer Lens

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Abstract

Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley is an English novelist mostly known for her gothic novel, *Frankenstein*. However, what many people are unaware of is that she may also be identified as queer. *Frankenstein* has been an important part of literature for its exploration of God and his creations, ambition, and ethical dilemmas. Still, one of the most overlooked aspects is the queer subtext that leaks from the author's subconscious. This presentation seeks to explain the queer themes within the character of Victor Frankenstein and his monster, the creature. By examining Victor's character through a queer lens, one may discover subtle meanings and parallels that will give an idea about the queer experience of Mary Shelley's time and how her own experience of queerness influenced her literature. This analysis argues that Victor Frankenstein can be interpreted as a closeted queer man grappling with societal expectations and internalised shame. Furthermore, it explores how the creature, often perceived as a symbol of monstrosity, represents queerness—something marginalised and feared during the Victorian era. By drawing a parallel, it briefly touches upon the iconic character Dracula, emphasising how monsters often symbolise queer individuals, especially within Gothic literature. Additionally, this study delves into the gender aspect of queerness and its association with the uncanny. This exploration extends to how queerness intersects with femininity and the experiences of women in Victorian society. Through a close analysis of passages and character interactions, it attempts to reveal how queerness is intricately woven into the fabric of the narrative. This presentation aims to open a new window to investigate *Frankenstein* as more than just a cautionary tale. It also might be a story that speaks to human experience, inviting the reader to consider the complexities of identity and how identity involves acceptance of gender and sexuality, too.

Keywords: Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, *Frankenstein*, Gothic Literature Monsters, Queerness, Femininity

¹⁴ İklimya Savaş is a third-year English Language and Literature student at Kırklareli University. She has a passion for gothic literature and monsters from gothic literature and the Victorian era. She loves looking at texts from a queer perspective and to focus on themes and subjects from these specific lenses.

Comparing the Influence of Postmodernism and Gender Roles on Istanbul's Representation in Novels: *Orlando* and *My Name is Red*

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Abstract

The study generally compares the visual representation of Istanbul between the postmodern novels *Orlando* (1928), written by Virginia Woolf, and *My Name is Red* (1998) by Orhan Pamuk, the first Turkish Nobel Prize-winning writer. It detects the important points these two novels demonstrate about Istanbul, influenced by gender roles and postmodernism. The novel *Orlando* takes its name from the main character, Orlando, who experiences a gender change in Istanbul during Ottoman times. In accordance with this, *Orlando* characterises a postmodernist personality that challenges social norms, looks for the ideal identity, and carries out the way of narrating with an unstable time flow. Similarly, *My Name is Red*, is considered a postmodernist work from Turkish literature, characterised by the flight of reality and a search for identity, derived from many characters appearing as narrators in the novel. Additionally, the roles of women in society are highlighted by prominent characters, Şeküre and Ester, who lived in Istanbul during the 16th century. *My Name is Red* shows their struggle with the search for identity and gender roles as women within Ottoman society by giving a voice to them as narrators of some parts of the novel. In light of these arguments, the study introduces the city and the authors in its opening chapter. It then delves into the portrayal of Istanbul and the postmodern narrative elements in the two novels in the subsequent chapter. The third chapter examines the similarities and disparities in gender roles within the novels, while also analysing the impact of these elements on the urban depiction of Istanbul during the Ottoman Empire is addressed in the fifth chapter.

Keywords: Gender Roles, Istanbul, *My Name is Red*, *Orlando*, Postmodernism

¹⁵ She is a fourth-year student in the department of English Language and Literature at Istanbul Yeni Yüzyıl University. As a result of enrolling in a double major program, she is also continuing her education as a third-year student in the Department of Translation and Interpreting. She participated in the Erasmus exchange program in the spring semester of 2023, and she studied at the University of Wrocław in Poland. After graduating from two departments, she is planning to focus on the field of Women and Gender Studies.

The Phenomenon of Dream in Nolan's *Inception* and Kafka's *A Country Doctor*

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Abstract

This research is proposed to illuminate the psychic journeys of Cobb in the film *Inception* and the doctor in the short story *A Country Doctor* on the unconscious level. In both fields of art of two successive centuries, the dream unfolds its uneasiness and power, tearing the audience and readers between reality and unreality paradox. It is the centrality of luminary Freud upon the different models of human psyche that, in both works, elucidates the unpredictability with endless possibilities through dreams. In achieving this, it can be pointed out that Cobb embarks on his unique experiences with Ariadne, having subjective perceptions, by bringing events, people, and magical moments together which are impossible in factual life. Likewise, Kafka breaks down the logical clarity via dream allegory, based on the manipulation of time and space through surreal images in which we lose our grip. The elements of nakedness, abruptness, disorientation, and excessive sexual connotations make the reader feel impossible to extrapolate properly in parallel with the same confusion in *Inception*. Overall, the phenomenon of dreams in doctor's "urgent journey" and Cobb's psychic journey are the very aim of this analogy. In essence, this study offers avenues for deeper explorations of these two fields of the 20th and 21st centuries through the works' related routes.

Keywords: dream, *Inception*, Kafka, Freud, consciousness

¹⁶ Nursena TEPE completed her four-year high school education in İstanbul. She is now a 4th-year student in the Department of English Language and Literature at Tekirdağ Namık Kemal University. She is currently in her 5th year with the preparatory class and aiming for a Master's degree in the field.

Absent Nature, Entangled Body, Virtual Reality in William Gibson's *Neuromancer*

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Abstract

This presentation will examine the themes of absent nature, liminal bodies, and cyberspace in William Gibson's *Neuromancer*, with a focus on posthuman entanglements. It will use theories such as simulacra and simulacrum, ecophobia, and post/transhuman bodies to explore the simulation of nature and the entrapment of transitional bodies within extensive systems such as corporations, politics, and cyberspaces. It will also argue that although nature is absent, it still has an active influence in Gibson's narrative. This influence affects systems and transitional entities, resulting in a significant psychological impact. This study aims to clarify the complex relationship between humanity, technology, and the environment by closely analyzing the text. By exploring these concepts, this presentation will offer insights into how individuals navigate the ambiguous boundaries between the natural and artificial, physical and digital realms. Lastly, this presentation will prompt questions about the fundamental nature of identity, agency, and existence in a world increasingly shaped by technology.

Keywords: William Gibson, *Neuromancer* Science Fiction, Simulacra, Post/Transhuman Body.

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Castle as a Representation of Human Psyche in Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*, Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, and Danielle Trussoni's *The Ancestor*

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Abstract

The gothic genre was first established following the publication of Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* in 1764. Gothic (*gotico* in Italian) was used by Italian architects in the 16th century to describe medieval buildings. Over the 18th century, the utilisation of the word became widespread and has begun to be used in literature with its current meaning; a genre characterised by supernatural, gloomy, mysterious, and daunting elements. In the 18th century, the genre reached its peak, and it became extremely popular. The gothic genre is referred to as “Gothic” due to its inspiration derived from medieval architecture and remnants, and therefore, such novels frequently employ castles with secret passages, dark battlements, hidden panels and doors. Moreover, the writers were profoundly influenced by those buildings, resulting in their utilizing castles as primary settings. Castles, therefore, are an integral part of gothic novels since they not only provide a menacing and enigmatic atmosphere for plots, but also represent the psychological condition of the characters. The intricate network of passageways, mazes and concealed spaces within the castle reflects the intricacy of the human psyche, as well as the internal conflict and mental challenges that the characters face. Thus, the castle is a fundamental component of Gothic literature, serving as a metaphor for the darkest recesses of the human mind and a bridge between good and evil, the past and present, and supernatural and human beings. Accordingly, through an in-depth analysis of three gothic novels, namely Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), and Danielle Trussoni's *The Ancestor* (2020), this paper attempts to explain the ways in which the castle, as the primary settings of these novels, represents the human psyche.

Keywords: Gothic Genre, Mystery, Horror, Novel, Literature

¹⁸ I'm Sherapat Usmanulyyeva, and I come from Türkmenistan. I'm fascinated by learning languages because it helps me understand different cultures better. Exploring languages isn't just about words; it's also about delving into the unique customs and traditions of each culture. It's exciting to discover new things and expand my knowledge across different fields. Plus, I'm a big fan of action-packed books.

“Shaking with aguish fear, and pain”: A Gothic Interpretation of *Goblin Market*

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Abstract

Christina Rossetti’s “Goblin Market” is a narrative poem about two sisters called Laura and Lizzie who come across mysterious merchant goblin men and the events they experience after Laura eats the fruits of the goblins. Even though the author claims the poem to be a story for children, it has been analyzed by researchers through different perspectives. It is interpreted in several ways, such as a feminist, anti-feminist, or anti-capitalist literary work. In this regard, this paper aims to analyze the narrative poem through a new point of view by finding out the Gothic elements in the poem and thereby defining it as Gothic fiction. Gothic literature, as a subset of Romantic literature, contains numerous fundamental elements and motifs such as supernatural beings, mystery, damsels in distress, and villains. It could be argued that the aforementioned Gothic elements and motifs are evident in “Goblin Market”, particularly through the presence of the supernatural goblins who deceive innocent girls to make them wither away, the ambiguity surrounding the origins of the goblins. Laura’s suffering from an inexplicable curse, the traumatic events Laura goes through, and the intense negative emotions she experiences as a result. Accordingly, the Gothic elements in the story are to be analyzed, through the excerpts from the poem to substantiate the argument that “Goblin Market” can be read as a Gothic tale.

Keywords: Gothic, Literature, Victorian Poetry, Christina Rossetti, Goblin Market

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Invasion in *The Tempest*

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Abstract

In this presentation, my purpose is to focus on the theme of colonialization in Shakespeare's play, *The Tempest*, written in the year 1611. The play explores the power dynamics, exploitation, and cultural clashes that often accompany the process of colonization while serving as an exceptional societal critique regarding the consequences of colonialism, not solely on the indigenous populations who endured invasion and were compelled to adopt Christianity and other European customs, but also on the conquerors themselves. In the play, the inhabitants of the island, Ariel and Caliban, are kept slaves as the outcome of the 'invasion' enforced by Prospero. When colonizing new lands, it is important to transfer the colonizer's language to the colony, and the main colonizer and his manners and attitudes towards the colonized which is the exact thing that Prospero did to Caliban. The way Prospero treats Caliban as a slave mirrors the power dynamics ingrained in colonial structures, where the colonizers exercise their dominance over the indigenous communities. With the relationship of Caliban and Prospero, Shakespeare explores themes of power, control, and oppression that are prevalent in colonial contexts. Through delving into the themes of colonialism, power struggles, and cultural hegemony in *The Tempest*, Shakespeare offers a complex depiction of colonialism that remains relevant to modern viewers.

Keywords: colonialism, the effects of colonialism, exploitation, power dynamics, cultural clashes.

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Postmodernist Subversion of Traditional Tales in *Nights at the Circus* by Angela Carter

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Abstract

Angela Carter argues that most intellectual development depends upon new readings of old texts. Her book, *Nights at the Circus* offers the possibility of meanings, in which the reader can conjure new meanings and relations to other texts, which enables *Nights at the Circus* to be interpreted by a comparison to the traditional tales. In this context, this paper intends to analyse the ironical re-imaginings of the traditional folk tale heroines; also known by their adaptations as animations by Walt Disney, in Carter's book *Nights at the Circus*. Also, it aims to examine how Carter uses traditional disputable femininity perception, criticising the stereotypical conceptions regarding women by blending her heroines into the modern world in connection with postmodern feminism. Intricately, Carter daringly rewrites tales' heroines in her own heroines by deftly fusing postmodern elements with traditional tale heroines. Embracing postmodernism, she employs techniques such as intertextuality, metafiction and irony to deconstruct conventional tropes and narratives. In a nutshell, Carter's book "*Nights at the Circus*" demonstrates how storytelling questions, undermines and subverts familiar narratives and notions, in order to deconstruct the conventional. As she asserts, she subverts the old stories and modernises them, which helps her to adapt them to modern problems such as gender and the conception of the "role of female".

Keywords: Postmodernism, Postmodern Feminism, Conventional tales, Angela Carter, Gender

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“Digital Identity Crisis vs Human-Self: Exploring the Fragmentation of Identity and Self in an Anti-Utopic Setting in E.M. Forster's "The Machine Stops"(1909)”

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Abstract:

This study delves into E.M. Forster's “The Machine Stops,” that includes the theme of identity crisis amidst a technologically dominated, anti-utopian world. The narrative takes place in a dystopian future where the omnipresent Machine dictates every aspect of life, from basic needs to intellectual pursuits. This relentless reliance on technology leads to a profound disintegration of self-identity, as individuals become mere cogs in the machine, devoid of genuine human experiences. This study focuses on characters Vashti and Kuno, contrasting Vashti's complete surrender to the comforts of technological convenience with Kuno's rebellious yearning for authentic human interactions and experiences beyond the confines of the Machine. Through their symbolic dialogues and pivotal moments, such as the Machine's eventual breakdown, the narrative powerfully underscores the inherent fragility of a system that fragments identity and dehumanizes existence. By indicating the complexities of this dystopian realm, the study convincingly argues that genuine human connection, innate curiosity, and freedom from the constraints of technology offer a transformative pathway to rediscover the essence of human existence. It persuasively posits that embracing these fundamental human values is not only essential for individual potential but also crucial for navigating the challenges of a technologically driven society. Consequently, this study sheds new and unique light on the transformative potential of embracing human values in the face of advancing technology, challenging the notion that technological progress always equates to societal advancement. It calls for a critical examination of our relationship with technology and a re-evaluation of the values that define our humanity.

Keywords: Dystopia, Science-Fiction, Identity Crisis, Fragmentation, Human Essence.

²² Alperen Yedekçi is a junior scholar pursuing a master's in English Language and Literature at Social Sciences University of Ankara. He aims to specialize in comics, graphic novels, science fiction-fantasy fiction, manga-anime studies, comparative literature, and drama studies. He also teaches part-time at Ostim Technical University and writes for "Söylenti Dergi." Alperen is also actively involved in theatre.