# RESEARCH DAY 2010

## Booklet of Abstracts & Participants

SCHOOL OF ENGLISH
ARISTOTLE UNIVERSITY
OF THESSALONIKI

*Polixeni Anagnostou*

**How True a Unitarian Elizabeth Gaskell Was**

Elizabeth Gaskell was a Unitarian by birth, marriage and location. Implanted in Unitarianism though she was, she never became a staunch Unitarian as might have been expected. Her stance towards it is not clear cut either in her personal life or her work. Her circle of friends and acquaintances included Unitarians and non-Unitarians alike. The many-sided Manchester minister's wife used her Unitarian connections to her benefit when necessary. Yet she criticized the narrowness of his powerful Unitarian congregation in her novels. There is no clear line of thought in her work regarding the Unitarian faith. The word is never mentioned in her novels or short stories. What is reflected in them is a simultaneous adherence to and subversion of Unitarianism and a mingling of various other beliefs and practices.

*Sotiris Babajimopoulos*

***Reservoir Dogs*: "New Violence" in a World of Extreme Referentiality**

Violence has ceased to serve a purpose and is hardly justified. Stretching the limits and challenging the cause-effect tradition, *New Violence* is a flexible narrative tool, occasionally evacuated of meaning and an extreme stylistic choice. In Tarantino's realm of references and "coolness," where plot and characters are a construction of random pop and cult references, violence is consciously redefined in terms of impact and excess. Whereas in a classic film *noir* dying takes only a fraction of a second, in *Reservoir Dogs* narrative unity is determined by the length of time it takes for a man to bleed to death. The intention of the presentation is to clarify the notion of *New Violence* in Tarantino's influential debut *Reservoir Dogs* (1992), which is most remembered for the notorious torture scene (Mr. Blonde playfully dancing and cutting off the police officer's ear).

*Katerina Chariopolitou*

***Mature* and *Emerging* Access Services on Digital Television in Greece**

The switch-off of analogue television in Europe by 2012 represents both a challenge and an opportunity for access services. Such services are intralingual subtitling, deaf signing and audio description and are used to enable those with physical (visual or hearing) or age-related impairments to overcome the difficulty they experience and access the storyline of a television programme. This paper focuses on DTV4All, a project funded by the European Commission and coordinated by Brunel University to facilitate the provision of access services on digital television across the European Union. The basic challenge is to identify improvements to existing access services provided by digital television in Greece (mainly intralingual audiovisual translation) and ways of addressing the key technical obstacles so as to ensure the sustainable take-up of these services in our country.

*Virginia Dakari*

**Staging the "C" Word: Performance and "the Recovery of Experience" in Marianne Paget's "The Work of Talk"**

This paper explores the performativity of cancer both as a linguistic signifier and as a metaphor for censored experience in Marianne Paget's experimental performance piece "The Work of Talk," based

on a social science article on medical errors. The aim of this study is to examine the failure of spoken discourse to contain and explain the disease, evaluating Paget's attempt to re-construct experience and fracture the "trappings of metaphor," Sontag's statement regarding cancer mythology, and prove that performance, which "privileges the experience" and "recovers the audience's capacity to participate and feel" can indeed spark change.

*Giorgos Dimitriadis*

**Postcard from Istanbul: Digital Reconstruction of the City as Memory in Tasos Boulmetis'** *Polítiki Kouzína / A Touch of Spice / Baharatin Tadi*

Digital architecture is commonly used in cinematography to enhance the depicted pro-filmic reality, creating virtual spaces in which layers of the narrative that are more difficult to represent via realistic mise-en-scéne, such as emotional conditions, become visually explicit.  The 2003 film *Polítiki Kouzína / A Touch of Spice / Baharatin Tadi* is an interesting example of this kind of cinematography.  The Istanbul-born Greek filmmaker Tasos Boulmetis digitally combines heterogeneous elements to reconstruct a virtual experience of his own sense of Istanbul, which eventually consumes the actual place. The urban landscape in the film is a hybrid of on-location scenes of the modern city, computer generated imagery (CGI) and enhanced coloring, digitally fused into a mural of historical and personal memory. By deliberately conveying a strong emotional tone to the audience, his film equates the notion of place with the memory and experience one has of it.  As the memory of mid-century Istanbul is digitally re-composed, the city dissolves under the pressure of its emotionally charged reflection, and the general concept of "location" is dematerialized and redefined in terms of individual perception. Digital architecture is thus used not simply to bring to life a past urban setting, but becomes a novel tool for affect, thus manifesting, perhaps more accurately than ever before, invisible layers of the filmic narrative.

*Despina Feleki*

**Remediated Forms of Writing in Stephen King's** *Duma Key*

The convergence of print and computer technology in our hyper-mediated culture is an undeniable fact. However, standing at the crossroad where text, picture and multi-media applications interact, one is left wondering where the narrative text actually stands. David Bolter states that "popular prose today seems constantly to be trying to become more visual and sensuous." Narration can no longer be seen as a simple "*communication* process" of a narrated message between addresser and addressee (Rimmon-Kenan). The aim of this brief presentation is to address this question directly by presenting a selection of short extracts from Stephen King's latest popular and bestselling fiction. The discussion will focus on how King's narrative techniques have deviated from and developed in tandem with traditional theories of narratology, paving the path for a remediated experience as regards writing and reading.

*Sonia Gertzou*

**Ambiguous Identities: Subjectivizing the Caribbean Other in Erna Brodber's** *Louisiana*

Erna Brodber's *Louisiana* poses the problem of ontology for the female diasporic Other, exposing the alienating effect of western interpellative mechanisms over the black female body. The power of the white ideological superstructure to name, de-scribe and delimit a place for the individual of color within a white History as a visible subject of difference is deconstructed through the intervention of the

performative and the ruse of repetition. Strategies of subversion, embodied performativity and repetition produce an estranging of the white representational frame and a crisis in recognition revealed as a crisis in temporality. In effect, the disjunctive temporality of a personal traumatic past transforms the Caribbean Other into a historical agent that renegotiates the question of the "I" through the collective "we," developing a space for the existence of a transatlantic black community of shared experience.

*Eirini Kapsidou*

**Effacing Subjectivity in Contemporary Portrait Photography**

Photography was invented in an era during which the importance of subjectivity and individualism was highly celebrated. From its inception, portrait photography has depicted, established or even shaped identities, thus affirming the centrality of the subject within the cultural milieu of previous eras. Contemporary portraiture, however, challenges the very notion of subjectivity, by exploring the limits of its representation. The fragmented, disarrayed in parts, even effaced subject, as portrayed by contemporary artists, certainly promotes a subversive view of identity. This paper will discuss photography by Aziz and Cucher, a contemporary American photographic duo, by focusing on their unusual series entitled *Dystopia* (1994-95). Through an analysis of photos from their work, I will examine the ways in which the photographers manage to create alienating portraits, forced to be enclosed within, rather than projecting an "inner essence" outside, by literally sealing the natural orifices on a face. In Aziz and Cucher's photography, the subject's "face," instead of being a signifier of meaning, paradoxically becomes unreadable, amorphous, thus confirming its aporetic place within an era of vast morphoplastic possibility.

*Öz Öktem*

**A Christian Not Turned Turk: Religious Ideology and Gender Politics in Massinger's *The Renegado***

Massinger's *The Renegado* (1624) is a tragicomedy that participates in the early modern dramatizations of the conflict between Christianity and Islam within the context of Mediterranean trafficking and renegadism. Similar to other works of the same genre, the play articulates the anxieties related to the Ottoman power and religious apostasy through enactment of an interfaith desire rather than an actual confrontation with Islamic military might. While the numbers of Christians lost to Islam was constantly increasing in this period, the play features the story of a Venetian gentleman who risks religious conversion for the temptation of an Ottoman princess, but eventually redeems himself and wins his beloved to the Christian side. Yet, when read against the historical facts, both the recovery of the Christian man and the conversion of the Muslim woman offers nothing more than a imaginative Christian victory, and in this paper I want to show how the image of the Islamic woman is used and ideologically inscribed in this fantastic recuperation of Christian patriarchy in an effort to efface the threat of Islam.

*Anna Papavasileiou*

**C.P. Cavafy: A Triumphant Exaltation in the Field of Art**

Cavafy has been repeatedly and variously translated into English. He is actually the most widely translated poet of Modern Greek. Cases of poets worldwide like Auden, Montale, Brodsky, Milosz and Longley who have written poems either influenced by or dedicated to Cavafy show the unique

influence he holds upon modern literature all over the world. Cavafy continues to be at the centre of attention of any Anglo-American translator, being by far the most translated Greek poet even compared to Nobel laureates and regardless of the years that have passed from the official publication of his complete work. The translations of the work of Cavafy, either completed or selected, have been published by the most prestigious publishing houses whereas individual translations have appeared in high quality journals. So, what are these particular elements in his poetry which have influenced poets and scholars universally, particularly in the English-speaking world? What makes his poetry survive in English translation? This paper attempts to answer these questions.

*Yanna Phillipou*

**A New Take on Old Tales: The History of Fairy Tales Revisited**

The founders of psychoanalysis turned to folk and fairy tales when they sought to expand their field of expertise from the consulting room to cultural practices, partly due to the prevalence of the nineteenth century view that these narratives were in effect spontaneously generated and collectively produced, and then orally enriched and transmitted. This view of the collective production and primarily oral dissemination of fairy tales continues to prevail, albeit with modifications which acknowledge the pervasive and substantial influence of written sources on these narratives. This presentation attempts to explore these theses, as well as a new theory which posits a written source for the tales today known as fairy tales.

*Maria Ristani*

**Rhythmic Ambivalence: Samuel Beckett and Minimalist Music**

My research around Samuel Beckett's treatment of rhythm in his late works has now turned to a parallel that might be drawn between the playwright's verbal language and the minimalist music idiom of the 1970s and '80s, as exemplified in the works of Terry Riley, Steve Reich, Philip Glass and La Monte Young. Beyond the obvious correlation between the two practices in terms of their similar tendency to reduce to fundamentals under the shared principle of "less is more," there is also common ground to be found in terms of rhythmic manipulation, for, in both idioms, rhythm materializes as an ongoing, unresolved conflict between stable, metric identity and its displacement. It is the aim of this paper to explore these ever transforming yet tight rhythmic grids that both worlds share, dwelling on the new understanding of temporality they inscribe, as well as on the ways in which they reassess received binaries, such as motion and stasis, or structure and process.

*Alexandra Simou*

**"Self" and "Other" in Greig's *Europe*: A Model Drama for a Multicultural Classroom**

The influx of a big amount of students from ethnically and culturally different backgrounds in Greek schools has brought up discussions around the concepts of the Self and the Other as well as the need to seek alternative teaching practices appropriate for the new situation. This presentation examines the concept of the migrant subject as the "Other" of our era via a reading of David Greig's *Europe*. More specifically, it analyzes the ways in which—in an era of globalization and severe economic crisis—the Western "Same" constructs the Migrant "Other," reaffirming the former colonial schema of the dominant, homogeneous, civilized Europe versus the subordinate, dependent and barbarian Other. Thus, based on an old pattern a new myth is created, that of the stable and oppositional pair of the

European versus the Migrant, which seems to dominate and prescribe the characters' attitudes. In that respect, the strong potential of the play both as a dramatic text that may trigger discussion around the concepts of the Self and the Other and as an inspirational pretext that may engage students in more theatrical activities is suggested.

*Filomachi Spathopoulou*

**A Malthusian Approach to Jane Austen**

The 18$^{th}$ century saw many important changes as to the way people conceived notions such as society, wealth, love and happiness. The influence of the Enlightenment as well as of the economic theories of the time led philosophers to seek new paths to happiness. Robert Malthus and Jane Austen both lived in what, for a section of the European sphere, was the latter part of a period of transition marked by the American and French Revolutions. People were starting to realize that nothing was permanent, and existing practices were deeply questioned, triggering serious debates as to the future of peoples. As the world—and with it the structure of society—was changing, achieving happiness seemed to many a utopia rather than a realistic possibility. In England political economists and sociologists expressed their fears and anxieties as to the future of the institutional and social structure of their society.
In my presentation I will attempt to draw parallels between Austen and Malthus and at the same time provide insights as to how she becomes critical of a theory which haunted the social imaginations of her contemporaries.

*Katia Tachmatzidou*

*Jane Eyre*: **The Governess as an Epistemological Agent**

The aim of this paper is to explore how aspects of male scientific and philosophical discourse inform the construction of the subjectivity of the governess in Charlotte Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre* (1847). More specifically, I focus on the representation of the mind which rests heavily upon the epistemological model of the Camera Obscura and Locke's discussion of mental activities. His representation of the mind as a bipartite entity, consisting both of an enclosed space and a mental agent within it, contributes to Jane Eyre's effort to construct her own knowledge as a mental progress from superstition to enlightenment. However, Jane's final enlightenment does not coincide with a total rejection of traditionally female ways of knowing, that is, intuition and superstition, but leads to their redefinition as new, alternative epistemologies. A major determinant in this redefinition is Jane's ambiguous social position as a governess, which reveals an epistemological standpoint that is unique among the viewpoints of the rest of the female characters in the novel. Jane juxtaposes her subjectivity as a knower with that of other women-knowers in the novel. She learns from them, but she does not wholly embrace their ways of knowing the world. In the end, by reappropriating their epistemic power, she elevates her own subjectivity, her epistemic agency and her enlightened way of thinking.

*Vicky Tialliou*

*Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* **vs.** *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*

Rowling's first volume of the *Harry Potter* saga underwent a series of transformations when Scholastic published it for the American market. Apart from the changes of the title and the illustrations, many words were Americanized or completely altered. Consequently, the vividness of Rowling's original story was quite diminished. As most of these changes were not necessary, since

Americans could have understood the original forms, they betray an effort to efface the novel's Britishness while constituting an act of belittlement of Americans. However, the fantastic element is reinforced for the reader across the Atlantic: since the boarding school experience and the public school story are not included in the consciousness of most Americans, they interpret *Harry Potter* differently and what constitutes narration with some realistic elements for the British belongs entirely to the realm of the fantastic for the Americans. Undoubtedly, the transatlantic rendition of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* resulted in such a transfiguration of the original text mainly due to cultural factors.

*Vasiliki Trantopoulou*

**Neomedievalism in the Service of Atavistic Fantasies: A Powerful Critique of Modernity**

Characters wearing medieval dress, living in hierarchical, vaguely feudal, semi-pastoral societies with low levels of technology brandish their swords at modernity, a period distorted by excessive civilization and rationalism. In a cultural search for alterity or "otherness," fantasy challenges the hegemony of reason by normalizing irrationality and finding shelter in intuitive forms of knowledge. The subversive polysemy of "nameless things and thingless names" compensates for social deprivation, disillusionment, social tensions, hollowness, the elevation of matter and materialism over all other values. However, violating and assaulting dominant assumptions in the milieu of a romanticized medieval past, when life was integrated, when culture was unhurried and going at a slow, changeless pace, protecting the inhabitants of this Eden behind "walled" cities seems more like a rehearsal of alternative scenarios from a position of safety, allowing them to be developed before being implemented to guarantee the preservation of bourgeois society. The Hyperborea myth of an innocent, uncorrupted people in a pristine land of milk and honey depicted in self-reflexive texts which play upon their own fictionality serves in creating or marshalling the desires of young adult audiences.

*Ziaka Katerina*

**Simon Stephens's *Motortown*: The Politics of War Trauma**

Psychic trauma, a notion that signifies the heavy psychosomatic impact a traumatic event can have on an individual, has always lent itself to dramatic exploration and exploitation. Diverse traumatic experiences have diachronically inspired plays but in the last tumultuous decade of the Iraq wars and the resurgence of terrorism, the focus of attention has inevitably been shifted from other traumatic themes to the war trauma. Simon Stephens's *Motortown* (2005) is a play written in the contemporary concurrence of political turmoil and atrocious events. Its leading character, Danny, is a British soldier who, after his military experience in Iraq, suffers from war trauma. *Motortown* is a highly political play that not only unfolds the painful trajectory of Danny's unsuccessful rehabilitation back home, but also employs war trauma patterns and significant trauma variables, such as the lack of social support, to expose the nosology of contemporary British culture, which according to Simon Stephens has bred the wars in Iraq.

# Research Day 2010

**annually held by the School of English Language and Literature**

**of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki**

## Participating departments:

**Department of American Literature & Culture**

**Department of English Literature and Culture**

**Department of Translation and Intercultural Studies**

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