

# 14<sup>th</sup> Biennial HUSSE Conference

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Veszprém, Hungary**

<http://husse2019.uni-pannon.hu/>

## **Panel Proposal**

### **IMAGE/TEXT/BODY PANEL (SZTE, IEAS) Panel Convenor: Anna Kérchy**

The papers presented in the panel offer iconotextual analyses of literature in English with the aim to explore creative interactions between words and images while focusing on the embodied stakes of intermedial dynamics. Contributors rely on seminal theoretical notions of iconographers, visual theorists, picturebook scholars, and adaptation experts (eg. Mitchell, Bal, Louvel, Nikolajeva, Hutcheon et al.) to study a variety of topics including pictures in books (illustrated novels), books on pictures (ekphrasis), books turned into (moving) images (cinematic adaptations), visual images fused with verbal narrative (graphic novels, comics), and bodies used like the pages of a book (corporeal inscriptions).

### **Session 1**

Kovács Ágnes Zsófia. Text and image in Edith Wharton's travelogues

Kérchy Anna. Tracing a Story in a Network of Cracks: Ekphrasis, Ellipsis, and Craquelure as Instruments of Feminist Politics/Poetics of in Chloé Aridjis' *Asunder*

Fodor András. The hole surrounded by walls: Visual and verbal (non)-representation of urban space in China Miéville's *Un Lun Dun*

Kocic-Zámbó Larisa. The Feminist Potential of Intermedial Narratives in Peter O'Donnell's *Modesty Blaise* Comic Strips

Bálint Emma. "[It] came from the woods (most strange things do)." Exploring the gruesome stories and landscapes of Emily Carroll's *Through the Woods*

### **Session 2**

Tóth Andrea. "Trapped between silence and speech: the process of victimization in *The Leftovers*"

Szarvas Réka. "My skin, you see, screams": A corporeal narratological analysis of Gillian Flynn's *Sharp Objects*

Tóth Zsófia Anna. Lady Susan's Comic Transfigurations across Media

Csetényi Korinna. Vampires Demythologized: Richard Matheson's *I Am Legend*

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## SESSION 1

### KOVÁCS Ágnes Zsófia. Text and image in Edith Wharton's travelogues

This essay focuses on the implicit gender politics of Wharton's texts and illustrations in her travelogues *Italian Backgrounds* (1904) *Fighting France* (1915), and *In Morocco* (1920) as sites where the intermediality of text/image reflects on the issue of femininity and textuality in three different contexts. Before the Great War, Wharton questioned the idea to publish her Italian travel essays accompanied by picturesque illustrations fitting the market for US ladies. Her precise observations and descriptions of the Italian past lacked the personal voice and emotion expected in periodicals for middle class women at the time. Yet, the illustrations remained and so did the contrast between text and illustration. During the Great War, her war reports represented the war in France from behind the frontlines, providing a female view of the devastation, replete with images of the elegant lady reporter among the material ruins. The illustrations represent her ambiguous physical closeness to and also difference from war destruction. After the war, her tourist book aims to document Morocco's immersion in the past that is soon to be swept away by modernization, as illustrated by images of shattered monuments of the past to be preserved from ruin. The relation of text and image foregrounds anxieties of feminine authorship and agency in all three books, albeit differently. The lady journalist before the war is out to establish her style and scope as a professional female author on Italy that surfaces in the stylistic tension between text and image. In the war reports, the lady reporter aims to represent war destruction in France as a witness of material devastation the image of her very person casts an opposite to. In the tourist book the colonial tourist aims at documenting the past in the present through images of historic buildings while implicitly accepting the (white male Western) French colonial politics of the present.

Keywords: Edith Wharton, travel writing, illustrations, picturesque, femininity, ambiguity, intermediality

Short bio: Ágnes Zsófia Kovács is associate professor of American Studies in the Institute of English and American Studies at the University of Szeged, Hungary. Her academic interests include the study of the (proto)modernist novel, esp. Henry James and Edith Wharton, travel writing and modernism, contemporary multicultural fiction, esp. Toni Morrison, postclassical narratology, the ethics of narrative, the theories of American Studies. She has published two books, *The Production of a Civilized Experience in Henry James* (Mellen, 2004), *Literature in Context* (Jate Press, 2010), and co-edited *Space, Gender, and the Gaze* (Cambridge Scholars', 2017)

### KÉRCHY Anna. Tracing a Story in a Network of Cracks: Ekphrasis, Ellipsis, and Craquelure as Instruments of Feminist Politics/Poetics of in Chloé Aridjis' *Asunder*

London-based Mexican writer Chloé Aridjis' 2013 novel *Asunder* is a corporeographic metafictional *museum novel* in so far as its plot revolves around art objects and art institutions which offer crucial heterotopic sites for the philosophical reflection of the protagonist preoccupied with the embodied dimension of aesthetic experience. Aridjis' heroine, Marie, a museum guard at the National Gallery, is obsessed with the invisible fissures on the surface of Velazquez's Rokeby Venus caused by suffragette Mary Richardson who attacked the painting with a meatcleaver in 1914 as a protest against women's objectification. I wish to argue that the fascination with craquelure, the focus on cracks instead of the canvas surface, offers a

strange subversion of the ekphrastic tradition. It directs attention to the performative act of brush/knifestroke and the short-circuits of signification instead of meaning fixation by mimetic visual representation. It challenges the male-, the museal-, and the medical- gaze in a variety of ways, while mingling notions of destruction and creation. It also mirrors/echoes the cracks of the visible by gaps in the texture of speakability, tearing through verbal narrativization by the rhetorical manoeuvre of ellipsis – and hence establishes the foundation of a feminist poetics and politics.

**Key words:** ekphrasis, ellipsis, feminist poetics/politics, museum novel, Aridjis

**BioNote:** Anna Kérchy is Associate Professor of English literature at the University of Szeged, Hungary. Her research interests include children's/YA literatures and cultures, the Victorian and the postmodern fantastic imagination, intermedial cultural representations, the post-semiotics of the embodied subject and corporeal narratology. She authored three monographs: *Alice in Transmedia Wonderland: Curiouser and Curiouser New Forms of a Children's Classic* (McFarland, 2016), *Body-Texts in the Novels of Angela Carter: Writing from a Corporeographic Point of View* (Edwin Mellen, 2008), and *Essays in Feminist Aesthetics and Narratology* (2018, JATEPress, in Hungarian, forthcoming). She edited the collection *Postmodern Reinterpretations of Fairy Tales* (2011), and co-edited collections on the literary fantastic (2010), the iconology of law and order (2012), the cultural history of Continental European freak shows (2012), posthumanism in fantastic fiction (2018), as well as an *EJES* special journal issue on feminist interventions into intermedial studies (2017), a *Bookbird* special journal issue on translating and transmediating children's literatures and cultures (2018), and an *Americana* special issue on interspecies encounters in postmillennial filmic fantasies (2018). She recently contributed chapters to the *Routledge Companion to Transmedia Studies* (2018) and the *Routledge Companion to Media and Fairy-Tale Cultures* (2018).

**FODOR András: The hole surrounded by walls: Visual and verbal (non)-representation of urban space in China Miéville's *Un Lun Dun***

China Miéville's portal quest fantasy young adult novel *Un Lun Dun* (2007) guides us to the eponymous UnLunDun, the underside of London, a fantastic urban space built up by substances "[M]ildly [O]bsolete [I]n [L]ondon", a junk-city distinguished by odd architectural constructs and metamorphic inhabitants. The book is illustrated by the author, however, it almost entirely omits the visual representation of UnLunDun as a space despite psychogeographical enchantment being a major narrative engine of the text. In a crucial episode, the characters enter a building that includes an entire forest, "a rum place", „full of noises" where „no one knows the paths". The visual representation of this place is confined to drawings of thorny vegetation which do not only function as decorative elements but also seem to resist the unraveling of place: the intrusion of the illustration within the textual realm both foregrounds and fills in a void in the understanding, a rupture of meaning and ties in with the unimaginable for the reader turned spectator. I wish to focus on this place and its verbal and visual (non)-representation and argue that on the one hand, the urban place becomes Fantastic of Space and causes "fantastic transgression" in the Garcian sense of the concept, while on the other hand, this spatial/representational deadend resonates with Mark Fisher's notion of the weird.

**Keywords:** fantastic city, place, space, China Miéville, representation, new weird

Bio: András Fodor is a PhD student at the University of Szeged, Faculty of Arts, Doctoral School of Literature in Hungary. He has been publishing reviews and short stories since 2010 mainly in his native tongue, Hungarian. In 2016 he has won the JAKKendő-award for his manuscript of first collection of short stories, *A mosolygó zsonglőr* (*The smiling juggler*), which has been published later in the same year. His research interests are spatiality, New Weird and China Miéville.

### **KOCIC-ZÁMBÓ Larisa. The Feminist Potential of Intermedial Narratives in Peter O'Donnell's *Modesty Blaise* Comic Strips**

The recent rise of graphic narratives to prominence within academic discourse is no doubt due to their susceptibility to remediation as many contemporary movies, television series, computer games and even novels are based on comics. In this they are transmedia phenomena, but more importantly they are intermedial narratives in and of themselves based on the interaction and collaboration of their images and words. It is for this reason, that Gabriele Rippl and Lukas Etter see graphic narratives as “ideal test cases for discussion of inter- and transmedial strategies of storytelling.” However, despite their alleged test case approach, Rippl and Etter’s theoretical rumination on the applicability of intermedial research to the study of graphic narratives is but a cursory listing of the many different ways words and images correlate and compete with each other within different comics. Thus, they are predominantly focusing on comics that explore and experiment with the possibilities of the graphic media narrative and are, consequently, neglecting more restricted and prescriptive forms of graphic narratives, like daily comics. However, I would argue that the intrinsic intermedial nature of comics merits more than just a passing comment in relation to daily strips. Building on Werner Wolf’s seminal notion of description as a transmedial mode of representation (2007), I will explore its applicability to and its function in comics strips. The daily strip I am focusing on in this paper is Peter O'Donnell’s spy fiction comics, *Modesty Blaise*, aiming to show how the constraints of the daily strip medium — especially the descriptive functions of its images — facilitate rather than limit the potential of *Modesty Blaise*’s feminist reading.

Keywords: daily strip, *Modesty Blaise*, description, image-text, intermedial narratives, feminism, female body

Short bio: Larisa Kocic-Zámbó is a Senior Assistant Professor at the Department of English Studies, University of Szeged. Her research interests include early modern literature, orality and literacy of culture, literature and religion, and theories and practices of popular culture (fandom and comics studies, digital culture). She is Assistant Editor of *TNTeF* interdisciplinary gender studies e-journal and the Web Editor of the Gender Studies Research Group’s webpage.

### **BÁLINT Emma. "[It] came from the woods (most strange things do)." Exploring the gruesome stories and landscapes of Emily Carroll's *Through the Woods***

*Through the Woods* (2014) by Emily Carroll is a widely acclaimed graphic novel that contains five macabre short stories relating terrifying encounters with the archetypal dark forest of classic fairy tales with the addition of various grotesque supernatural creatures that lurk within them. What makes the book’s connection to the realm of fairy tales truly irrevocable, however, are the presence of more or less evident intertextual references to

various children's stories, such as "Little Red Riding Hood", "Bluebeard", Lewis Carroll's Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, and Tim Burton's Corpse Bride. While the temporal setting of each narrative is broadly identifiable by its visual depiction, their geographical location is left unspecified, reinforcing Emily Carroll's representation of the forest as an emblematic and universal space where the unimaginable is manifested, and where bodies become fragmented and evil spirits roam disembodied. In *Through the Woods*, the spellbinding combination of Carroll's elaborate drawings and befitting choice of words work together as imagetext not merely to convey the fascinating narratives but also to plant feelings of discomfort and uncanniness in the reader through joint effort. The aim of this paper is to examine the way renowned fairy tale motifs—with a special emphasis on the trope of the forbidden forest among them—are adapted in this particular book, and to investigate what effect the variation of the narrative mode and the inseparable nature of image and text have on their application in this inter- and multimedial work of art.

Key words: graphic novel, horror, fairy tale, imagetext, inermediality

Bio: Emma Bálint, Ph.D. candidate, University of Szeged, does research in fairy-tale studies, adaptation studies, and new media. She has presented papers in these topics at several international conferences. She has also published research papers and reviews with similar foci in the online journals AMERICANA (2013, 2014, and 2016), Apertúra (2014), and TNTeF (2014), in print in HJEAS (2017), and in the edited volumes, *Travelling around Cultures: Collected Essays on Literature and Art* (2016) and *Turning the Page—Gendered Identities in Contemporary Literary and Visual Cultures* (2017). Bálint has been the review editor of AMERICANA: E-journal for American Studies since 2015. She is currently working on her dissertation on new media adaptations of the tale "Little Red Riding Hood" created for young adult and adult audiences, examining the variable role of the reader/viewer/player and the implications of crossover readership. [emma.balint@ieas-szeged.hu]

## SESSION 2

### **TÓTH Andrea. "Trapped between silence and speech: the process of victimization in *The Leftovers*"**

According to Jodi Dean (2009), there has been a ground gaining of the victim position in contemporary U.S. culture that is (1) connected to the rights discourse associated with civil rights, women's rights and sexual minority rights movements, but (2) highly inconsistent with the politics of the new left characterized by claims to power. The position of the victim is the manifestation of a social double bind: to occupy the morally correct position of the victim one has to speak the language of weakness, suffering and loss; while those who feel powerful enough to speak are not considered to be injured by the wrongs of society, thus they are denied moral correctness. The hegemony of the victim has solidified since September 11, the social trap becoming deadly dividing: those who don't speak as victims are devoid of social standing, and they are not even supposed to speak. In my presentation I intend to demonstrate the process of victimization through the television series *The Leftovers* (2014–2017), based on the eponymous novel of Tom Perrotta (2011), displaying the consequences of a global event called the "Sudden Departure", the enigmatic disappearance of two percent of the world's population on October 14, 2011.

**Keywords:** hegemony of victim; language of victimization; post-September 11; *The Leftovers*.

**Bio:** Andrea Tóth is junior research fellow at the Department of Library and Human Information Science and lecturer at the Department of English Studies, University of Szeged. She received her PhD in English and American literatures and cultures at the University of Szeged, and holds an MA in English Language and Literature, Communication Studies and Sociology from the University of Szeged. She is the member of the Gender Studies Research Group (TNT), Szeged. Her main research fields include the Eastern-Central European reception of Western feminist theories, analysis of the gender relations in Hungary, as well as social workings of postsocialist identities. E-mail: andretothie@gmail.com

**SZARVAS Réka. “My skin, you see, screams”: A corporeal narratological analysis of Gillian Flynn’s *Sharp Objects***

Gillian Flynn’s debut novel, *Sharp Objects* (2006) tells the story of a journalist, Camille Preaker who returns to her hometown to report on the brutal murder of two young girls. The crime thriller outlines a trauma narrative centred on Camille’s pathological relationship with her sister and her mother, as well as her addiction to self-harming that holds special feminist metafictional implications, as she is carving psychologically charged words into her skin. In 2018 HBO adapted the novel into a crime mystery miniseries, starring Amy Adams in the feature role, with the tagline “Welcome home”. I wish to explore how the filmic adaptation of the novel – that focuses on the text cut in the protagonist’s bodily surface and the embodied diary written in/with her scars – realizes an intriguing, intersemiotic relationship between text, image, and body. I rely on David Punday’s corporeal narratology (2003) to explore how Flynn’s narrative techniques challenge conventional representations of femininity, female embodiment and feminine writing, on multiple media platforms.

**Keywords:** Sharp objects, Gillian Flynn, corporeal narratology, writing on the body, self-cutting

**Bio:** Réka Szarvas is a first year Phd-student in the Doctoral School of Literature at the University of Szeged. Her research interests include gender studies, contemporary women’s writing, feminist metafiction and corporeal narratology. Her dissertation is a continuation of her Master’s Thesis entitled *Mad Housewives and Cool Girls: Reading Gillian Flynn’s Novels as Feminist Metafiction* (2018). Her articles are forthcoming in TNT and Americana.

**TÓTH Zsófia Anna: Lady Susan’s Comic Transfigurations across Media**

In this paper, I will discuss a unique text-image synergy à la Whit Stillman: *Love and Friendship*, a 2016 film inspired by Jane Austen’s writings. Stillman was a pioneer not only in so far as he was the first to adapt Austen’s novel *Lady Susan* (1793-4) to the silver screen but also due to his surprising decision to fuse this short epistolary piece with another early work *Love and Freindship* (sic!) (1790); hence creating a spectacular visual transfusion and transmutation of two pieces of Austenian juvenilia. The film focuses on Lady Susan’s erotic body and Machiavellian mind as sites of social signification, intrigue, and disruption. This cinematic adaptation is fuelled by a unique intermedial combination of verbal and visual humour: the body of Lady Susan – not so much a passive object but a weapon – and her high intellectual capacities are manifested in her discursive and spectacular self-stylizing machinations. Thus various humorous modes of expression are combined in the film to reveal

the ‘truth’ lying hidden under the chaos that Lady Susan creates. Additionally, this filmic reinterpretation evokes Austen’s early satirical, even acerbic, and witty style so characteristic of the juvenilia pieces that became unjustly toned down, if not erased by the mainstream consumer culture and publishing industry. I wish to prove that the film tackles the difficulties of representing and expressing women’s humour through a curious intertextual, palimpsestic, intermedial image-text cross-breeding.

**Keywords:** *Love and Friendship* (2016), *Lady Susan*, Jane Austen, wit, film adaptation

**Short bio:** Zsófia Anna Tóth received her PhD in British and American literature and culture from the University of Szeged, and is currently a senior assistant professor at the Department of American Studies, Institute of English and American Studies, University of Szeged. Her general research interests are film studies, cultural studies, humor theories, literary theory, gender studies as well as British and American literature and cinema. Her main research field is concerned with the representation of female aggression and violence in American literature, culture and specifically film. Her other main fields of interest include Jane Austen (her works, their adaptations as well as her legacy, her ‘afterlife’) and the *New Woman* – her representation and historical, cultural reception (academic and otherwise). Her first book, entitled *Merry Murderers: The Farcical (Re)Figuration of the Femme Fatale in Maurine Dallas Watkins’ Chicago (1927) and its Various Adaptations*, was published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing (UK) in 2011. Her current research topics are humor theories, humor and gender, women’s humor, and especially the work(s) (and the phenomenon) of Mae West.

### **CSETÉNYI Korinna. Vampires Demythologized: Richard Matheson’s *I Am Legend***

A major source of inspiration for contemporary horror fiction, Richard Matheson’s dystopian novel *I Am Legend* (1954) offers multiple readings for scholars, ranging from a reflection of Cold War anxieties to a critique of science. It is a post-apocalyptic narrative, refusing easy labeling, since it employs features of both sci-fi and horror. Categorization is thematized in the work itself, as the protagonist’s chief preoccupation is the boundary setting between human and inhuman, normal and abnormal, the healthy and the infected.

Shifting power relations, role reversals, a new world emerging out of the ashes of the old one (necessitated by a devastating epidemic), and the overturning of majority concepts are some of the main concerns of the book. Although it has been filmed several times, the movie versions all neglect the radical closure of the text, where the ambiguity of its title is finally resolved. In my presentation I intend to concentrate on the novelty of *I Am Legend*, how it reinvigorated (and demythologized) the vampire, the necessary connection between violence and order, and the figure of the Other.

Key words: Richard Matheson, *I Am Legend*, vampires, horror, the Other

Bio: Korinna Csetényi is a Senior Assistant Professor at the Department of Modern Languages at the Juhász Gyula Faculty of Education, at the University of Szeged. She defended her PhD on *The Metafictional Narrativization of the Traumatized Body and Monstrous Femininity in Stephen King’s Horror Fiction* at the same university. Her main academic interests are American popular fiction, Gothic and horror literature and the place of Stephen King within this genre, together with his impact on contemporary culture. E-mail: korinnac@yahoo.com