



ALEXANDRU IOAN CUZA UNIVERSITY of IAȘI

Faculty of Letters
Department of English

Inscriptions on the Body: Violence and Its Encodings in Literature and Film

A RO-UK 4 conference

Friday, 19 November 2010

08:00-08:45 Registration

(Senate Hall, University, Building A, 2nd floor)

09:00-10:00 Opening ceremony

Guests: Prof. dr. Vasile Ișan, Rector of “Al. I. Cuza” University of Iași, Prof. dr. Henri Luchian, Vice-Rector for International Relations, Prof. dr. Ștefan Avădanei, Dean of the Faculty of Letters, Prof. dr. George Poede, Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy and Social Political Sciences
(Senate Hall, University, Building A, 2nd floor)

10:00-11:30 Plenary session

Prof. dr. David Worrall, Leverhulme Research Fellow & Research Leader in English, Nottingham Trent University

Ethical Cleansing: British Military Theatre in Occupied Philadelphia, 1778

Dr. Georgina Lock, Senior Lecturer in English and Creative Writing, Nottingham Trent University

Theatre On The Margins, Hannah Snell, The Female Soldier and the Manual Exercise, 1750

Chair: Prof. dr. Ștefan Avădanei (Senate Hall, University, Building A, 2nd floor)

11:30-12:00 Coffee break

12:00-14:00 Paper sessions

14:00-15:00 Lunch

(“Titu Maiorescu” Cafeteria)

15:00-15:45 Plenary session

Prof. dr. Mihaela Mudure, “Babes-Bolyai” University, Cluj

Romania as a Trauma. Considerations upon Romanian-American Literature

Chair: Prof. dr. Rodica Albu (Senate Hall, University, Building A, 2nd floor)

15:45-16:00 Coffee break

16:00-18:00 Paper sessions

18:00-19:00 Six o'clock tea (Department of English, 2nd floor)

Optional: *Falstaff Show*, “Vasile Alecsandri” National Theatre, Uzina cu Teatru (from 19:30)

Detailed programme

09:00-10:00 Opening ceremony

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11:30-12:00 Coffee break

12:00-14:00 Paper sessions

British literature (room 3.15 “Grigore Vereş”, 2nd floor)

Convenor: David Worrall

1. Anda Dimitriu - *Symbolic Violence in Jane Austen’s **Pride and Prejudice***
2. Stănescu Mădălina - *Violence as Innate Primal Instinct in William Golding’s **Lord of the Flies***
3. Lucia Opreanu - *A Bruise upon a Bruise: forms and traces of violence in Graham Swift’s **Out of This World and Waterland***
4. Oana Maria Petrovici - *Hugh MacDiarmid’s National Feeling – Living with a Fracture*
5. Laura Leon – *The Classical Pattern of Th. Hardy’s Tragic Novels Seen as Cultural Representations: Blind Destiny as Heredity and Degeneration*

Commonwealth literature (lab. B, 3rd floor)

Convenor: Rodica Albu

1. Dragoş Cristian Zetu – *The Dependency Trap: Alice Munro’s **The Peace of Utrecht***
2. Laura – Violeta Duta - *Splendid Resilience: Women Facing Violence in Jack Hodgins’s **The Invention of the World and Broken Ground***
3. Cristina-Georgiana Voicu - *Unchanging Bodies and Failed Relationships in Jean Rhys’s **Good Morning, Midnight***
4. Dana Bădulescu – *The Rushdie Affair*

American Literature I (Department of English, 2nd floor)

Convenor: Iulia Milică

1. Andreea Mingiuc - *Revengeful Violence. Hannah Duston’s Captivity Narrative and the Puritan Paradox*
2. Alexandra Radu - *Violence in the Cabin: **Uncle Tom’s Cabin***

3. Iulia Andreea Milică - *Choosing Worlds: Hybrid Identities in George Washington Cable, Kate Chopin and Charles Waddell Chesnutt*

5. Oana Cogeanu - *Inscriptions on the African Body: Alice Walker's Possessing the Secret of Joy*

14:00-15:00 Lunch

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Chair: Prof. dr. Rodica Albu

(Senate Hall, University, Building A, 2nd floor)

15:45-16:00 Coffee break

16:00-18:00 Paper session

Cultural studies (lab. B, 3rd floor)

Convenor: Adrian Poruciuc

1. Adrian Poruciuc - *Tattooing as “Script”*

2. Codruț Șerban – *A Body Not-so-Divine: Rape, Power and Same-Sex Sexuality in Early Colonial America*

3. Daniela Doboș - *Descriptions of the Body: Violence in the Subcultures of Contemporary Romanian Youth*

4. Lorelei Caraman - *Gentle War and Violent Peace: The Sugar-coated Language of Western Military Intervention.*

5. Marius-Bogdan Tudor - *The Underlying Violence of Nonviolent Direct Action: Martin Luther King Jr. and Civil Disobedience*

6. Cristina Gavriluță, Mihaela Frunză – *Agresivitatea contemporană. O perspectivă antropologică*

American literature II (Department of English, 2nd floor)

Convenor: Dana Bădulescu

1. Irina Chirica - *Conquered Landscape*

2. Alina Anton - *Invading the female body: Skewering the Silence in Nora Okja Keller’s Comfort Woman*

3. Anca-Luisa Viusenco - *Violence through the Lens of Innocence: Reflections on Alice Walker’s “The Flowers”*

4. Sorina Maria Ailiesei - *Deciphering Patterns of Violence and Wounds of Selfhood in Amy Tan’s Work*

5. Simona Mitocaru - *Shattered Identity and Violence in Sam Shepard’s Plays: a Question of Ambivalence*

6. Pascariu Lucia-Hedviga - *Performing Violence in Edward Albee’s The Zoo Story*

Film studies (room 3.15 “Grigore Vereș”, 2nd floor)

Convenor: Veronica Popescu

1. Odette Blumenfeld - *Horrific Violence in Silviu Purcarete’s Staging of Titus Andronicus and in Julie Taymor’s Film Adaptation*

2. Ilinca-Miruna Diaconu - *Psychological Violence in Tengiz Abuladze’s Repentance*

3. Ileana Chiru-Jitaru - *Amending codes of violence from page to screen: The Color Purple*

4. Gianina Roman - *The Urban Shift of the Western: Inscriptions of Violence in Cormac McCarthy's **No Country for Old Men***
5. Veronica Popescu – *Scars of War: Kathryn Bigelow's **The Hurt Locker*** (2008)

18:00-19:00 Six o'clock tea (Department of English, 2nd floor)

Abstracts

British literature

1. Anda Dimitriu - *Symbolic Violence in Jane Austen's **Pride and Prejudice***

Since the world we now live in is filled with numerous kinds of violence, ranging from forms of utter physical torture to apparently minor acts of symbolic aggression, this paper will try to emphasize how new theories of symbolic violence can be applied to older novels, namely how Pierre Bourdieu's theories match the facts, events and details in Jane Austen's most famous novel, *Pride and Prejudice*. To do so, I will first clarify the key concepts of social domination and *habitus*, and then I will try to match his main ideas to examples from Jane Austen's novel. In this sense, I will underline both the importance of the social environment, of money and of marriage as a means of achieving the gender domination Bourdieu describes, as well as the relation between the two protagonists of the novel, Elizabeth Bennet and Fitzwilliam Darcy, as predetermined and influenced by society and by the pre-existent schemata of thought. Taking Bourdieu's theory as a starting point, I will try to demonstrate that the novel *Pride and Prejudice* is a perfect example of symbolic violence in this sense, and to support the argumentation, I will employ both critical and personal ideas.

2. Stănescu Mădălina - *Violence as Innate Primal Instinct in William Golding's **Lord of the Flies***

My paper aims at discussing violence as an innate primal instinct and at examining humans' inclination towards violent acts. The analysis is centered on William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, which represents one of the best examples of books dealing with the controversial theme of human nature. The novel is about some schoolboys stuck on a deserted island, who try to govern themselves while trying to find a way to be rescued, their actions leading, in the end, to chaos. The time spent on the island, far from any form of civilization, brings to the surface the children's aggressive impulses, as a symbol of human beings' primal instinct to hurt others. In order to explore the stated topic, this paper will adopt Freud's view concerning human nature, namely that humans have an unconscious desire for violence, which they want to satisfy.

This paper will closely examine the characters' actions and will demonstrate how man's instinct shows in the absence of rules or of any type of authority. The investigation of this novel will focus on illustrating that what stops humans from behaving governed merely by impulse is the constraining aspect of the society they live their life in. Therefore, human beings are characterized by a strong internal force that causes acting in one direction instead of another, but the different sets of laws, regulations or social customs prevent them from showing their innate violent instincts.

3. Lucia Opreanu - *A Bruise upon a Bruise: forms and traces of violence in Graham Swift's **Out of This World and Waterland***

Violence in its various forms is such a predominant concern in contemporary fiction it is by no means difficult to find examples of it in the works of an impressive number of British novelists. While lacking the explicitness, wealth of graphic details and indeed the tendency to dwell on elaborate descriptions of violent crimes favoured by writers such as Peter Ackroyd, Angela Carter and Ian McEwan, Graham Swift's texts are at least of equal interest in terms of the attention paid to the numerous face(t)s of violence, as well as to the deep if not always detectable marks imprinted on the victims. The centrality of the terrorist bomb attack to the plot of *Out of This World* singles out Swift's fourth novel for special attention at least as regards the idea of violence and even a superficial reading yields ample material, from the historical background of war (the conflict over the Falkland Islands) and the detailed presentation of major campaigns of the twentieth century to the personal history of its protagonists. This paper aims to trace the different reactions to and manifestations of violence across the three generations (discussing such details as Harry's morbidly intrusive photographs, his father's hero status and ammunition factory, his daughter's verbal aggressiveness), then focus on the frequent philosophical disquisitions on the topic to be encountered in the text, before moving on to a much more critically acclaimed novel and its intricate palimpsest of bruises upon bruises, hissing guillotines, self-inflicted violence, revenge, murder, madness and guilt.

4. Oana Maria Petrovici - *Hugh MacDiarmid's National Feeling – Living with a Fracture*

In the search for a national identity of an organic nature, Hugh MacDiarmid conveys a surprising conclusion in his poem *A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle*: the life that the ontological fracture of conscience gives an individual who is constrained to a perennial morality, forces forth an organic impossibility. The making of the poem itself proves the poet's inability to decide a coherent order for the fragments he wrote, and makes it a matter of mind-, or art-reading for someone "non-intoxicated", as it

happens, to perform for the other readers. When the story of a representative individual (a poet) becomes a national allegory, not only is his fractured self multiplied into a fractured national identity, but his paradoxical acts of further fracturing into his conscience, for the sake of knowledge and new sensations, become the main drive of an oxymoronic national self which resists unitary approaches to artistic expression and devours its own language by necessity. The novelty in this pain-ridden construal of the self is its new value, especially in the face of quasi-fixed pillars of the national tradition: the entity with a Frankenstein-type composition has just as much a right to life and recognition as the extant organic whole-body selves.

5. Laura Leon – *The Classical Pattern of Th. Hardy's Tragic Novels Seen as Cultural Representations: Blind Destiny as Heredity and Degeneration*

Th. Hardy's preoccupation with heredity as fate stems from his personal interest in his lineage and also from the general Victorian obsession with Darwinian theories and the degeneration of noble families. His obsession can be traced throughout his early novels and early poetry, but culminates in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. In *A Pair of Blue Eyes* heredity as fate appears in the pedigree, physical appearance and nature of Elfride Swancourt. In *Far from the Madding Crowd* we get, in embryo, some of the many characteristics to be found in later masterpieces. Degeneration that acts like a "blind destiny" comes to be understood as an outside force against which characters cannot fight. The problem of degeneration and heredity takes another path in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, the degenerate space that has a disastrous effect on people. On the other hand, in *Jude the Obscure*, it is a hereditary predisposition of degeneracy that seems to function as a **tragic flaw**. However, Hardy's views on heredity and degeneration are most clearly depicted in his novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. Tess is a young woman caught at the end of a dying family. Out of all Hardy's novels, *Tess...* is the one in which the sense of **Time** is felt at its best. This preoccupation with Time and family origins make her pilgrimage begin with a quest for her family history and it concludes with the oppression of Tess at the hands of her own past. Hardy's imagination seized on the idea that we carried our destiny within us in the form of that "sommel in our blood" (*Jude...*) that Victorian science was beginning to define more closely, and no English novel before *Tess...* had analyzed these things so deeply on the precariousness of individual identity.

Commonwealth literature

1. Dragoş Cristian Zetu – *The Dependency Trap: Alice Munro's The Peace of Utrecht*

In his extensive study of Alice Munro's fiction W. R. Martin suggests that *The Peace of Utrecht* is a turning point. From this moment on Munro will explore new themes with a greater profundity and will approach the short-story genre from a totally different perspective.

This paper will analyze the way Munro deals with family relationship, taking into account the fact that the Canadian writer offers a deep insight into her characters' psychological development (the main characters are two sisters, Helen and Maddy). We will demonstrate that peace between the two is impossible because Maddy is involved in what psychologists call a severe addictive relationship which continues to control her life even though the object of this dependency (her mother) is dead.

2. Laura – Violeta Duța - *Splendid Resilience: Women Facing Violence in Jack Hodgins's The Invention of the World and Broken Ground*

In an unpublished class conference from the University of Virginia in 1957, Faulkner said "I think women are wonderful. They're stronger than men". As an admirer of Faulkner's work, there is no surprise that Jack Hodgins's novels are populated with splendid female characters.

In a violent world, the women in the novels of the Canadian writer succeed in facing the adversity with grace, resilience and strength.

My paper will discuss the female characters and their attitude towards violence in two of Jack Hodgins's novels, *The Invention of the World* (1977) and *Broken Ground* (1999). While Maggie and Lily from *The Invention of the World* are fighting against a past destroyed by the tyrannical Donal Keneally, the many feminine voices from the Portuguese Creek in *Broken Ground* are determined to fight against a present of hardships and a past full of ghosts of the war. My paper will also address the issue of violence, be it psychological or physical, as factor that shapes the minds of the people and the destinies of their communities. The development of the women and the unfolding of their personal histories in these two novels are deeply marked by violence, hence I will also focus on the various ways violence is dealt with: the women in *The Invention of the World* are playing a role that turns them into the healers of the entire community, while those in *Broken Ground* are acting like pioneers, in a land of stumps and explosions, of ghosts and dark memories.

3. Cristina-Georgiana Voicu - *Unchanging Bodies and Failed Relationships in Jean Rhys's Good Morning, Midnight*

This paper attempts to show the descriptions of failed relationships which fill the pages of Jean Rhys' *Good Morning, Midnight*. Even as the characters, particularly the narrator Sasha, attempt to form relationships through reading each others bodies, they are repeatedly foiled. This failure is specifically tied to the city, the only real site of connection Sasha has, which encourages extreme anxiety over changing bodies. By promoting an obsessive interest in sameness and fear of change, the city damages the ability of people to engage in bodily reading and relationship building. Sasha is presented again and again with chances to make connections and build relationships, yet those relationships are doomed as long as she remains incorporated into the value system of the city, which promotes artificial bodies that cannot connect. *Good Morning Midnight* suggests that people's bodies, altered in search of an unreachable ideal to match the city aesthetic, are unreliable indicators of people's violent stories and emotions and thus cannot make the adaptations necessary to produce relationships.

4. Dana Bădulescu – *The Rushdie Affair*

This paper looks into the backlash against the publication and circulation of Salman Rushdie's novel *The Satanic Verses*. We start from the premise that his novel, and Rushdie's writing in general, reflects the author's cultural and linguistic hybridity, his "many-rootedness" being typical of modern and postmodern societies. Rushdie's hybridity posits him rather ambiguously both inside and outside East and West, actually in some sort of *cultural limbo*, which makes him equally critical of both. For Rushdie, writing is his way of responding to the world, even at the risk of his own life. The paper traces the history of fierce controversies around *The Satanic Verses*, which degenerated into copies being publicly burned, bookstores firebombed, translators attacked and even killed, and the *fatwa* against Rushdie and the book's publishers, which are extreme forms of violence and long-term psychological harassment. This controversy sheds light on the fundamental rift between East and West, while the novel itself becomes a battlefield where the two cultures wage their war. The most recent landmark in the history of this cultural conflict is the moment when Rushdie was knighted in 2007, which re-kindled the warfare against Rushdie through a new wave of mass demonstrations and allegedly the bomb attack in central London on 29 June 2007. Rushdie's response to these ongoing outbursts of violence has been a call for freedom and independence as principles governing "the unfettered republic of the tongue." This response places Rushdie even more firmly in the *interval of a multi-rooted culture*, which is the expression of the human condition itself.

American Literature I

1. Andreea Mingiuc - *Revengeful Violence. Hannah Duston's Captivity Narrative and the Puritan Paradox*

The Captivity Narrative of Hannah Duston is well known for its violence inflicted not necessarily by the Indian captors (a common motif in 17th century New England) but by the woman captive. The story, first recorded in Cotton Mather's *Magnalia Christi Americana* (1702), brings forth the image of the captive Puritan woman, traditionally endowed with passivity and patience, this time bearing the horrifying spectre of violent revenge. I intend to question the captive's violent way of dealing with the experience of captivity (that was generally thought of as being spiritual as much as physical) by touching upon Walter Benjamin's approach on the matter in his *Critique of Violence* (especially the issue of natural right and positive right) and also by analyzing the paradox that arises from the situation – a Puritan wife and mother killing and scalping Praying Indians and thus becoming a hero of the community of the "visible saints". Interestingly enough, Hannah views the time of her captivity as the most valuable she has ever had and becomes the first woman in the United States to have a statue erected in her honour. Is her violent act legitimated by a noble end? Is this a case of temporary madness triggered by seeing her newborn child being murdered? Why does she become an exponent of the Puritans in the wilderness and their noble enterprise after having committed the violent act? Is the written account her personal one? These are the questions that I will try to answer in my paper.

2. Alexandra Radu - *Violence in the Cabin: Uncle Tom's Cabin*

Uncle Tom's Cabin was an extremely influential book of the slave era period. The depictions of the indignities and horrors of enslavement in this book had a great impact on Americans' attitude towards slavery, thus leading to the Civil War. Uncle Tom faces all the cruelties that a slave would bear in the South, dying under the lash of a henchman of a cruel plantation owner, Simon Legree. We can say that Tom is the first black hero in American fiction, and both the film and the book seem to emphasize this and the tragedy that black Kentucky families face when separated and "sold down the river". But despite Legree's tearing of the black flesh, Uncle Tom still remains faithful to his Bible and the one who comforts

his “brothers”. Whether his body represents the body of every African-American subdued and molested by the Whites in the mid-19th century is an issue overtly discussed in the paper. Have the scars remained in their souls?

3. Iulia Andreea Milică - *Choosing Worlds: Hybrid Identities in George Washington Cable, Kate Chopin and Charles Waddell Chesnutt*

In a world where the white and the black race have coexisted for centuries, the illusion of racial purity is only a strategy of the white to preserve their power. However, if the black people had long been considered inferior to the white, the mixture of the races did not bring any rise in status and miscegenation was long considered a sin. Racial distinctions are more than skin-deep, and color is a misleading sign of a person's race. Looking white (“passer-pour-blanc”) but needing to obey the “one-drop rule,” individuals of mixed race had a more difficult position. On the one hand, many of them were free and enjoyed a better life than the black slaves, many being educated and well-off, still, they did not belong either to the white community, or to the black. If George Washington Cable and Kate Chopin deal more with the tragic destinies of mixed-blood individuals in the South before the Civil War, Charles Waddell Chesnutt avoids the tragedy, but points to an ironic situation: if the pre-war slave system allowed a finer distinction between different types of race mixture and the existence of a group of individuals of mixed blood as a coherence caste of people, the situation changes after the War. This group is doomed to extinction as people are supposed to be either white or black, those in the middle being forced to choose where they can fit.

5. Oana Cogeanu - *Inscriptions on the African Body: Alice Walker's Possessing the Secret of Joy*

The final novel of Alice Walker's African trilogy, *Possessing the Secret of Joy* (1992), stands out within Walker's writing as the literary text that comes closest to political activism. This paper aims at analyzing the inscription of/on the African woman's body in *Possessing the Secret of Joy* with a view to assessing the novel's literary and political achievements. The analysis demonstrates that, in telling the story of two kinds of African women: those who are forbidden the right to own their bodies, and those who forbid others this right, Alice Walker constructs two archetypes of female complicity with patriarchy, “the betraying mother” and “the betrayed daughter”, and has them destroy themselves and each other because of their beliefs in, and questioning of, ritual female circumcision. To this end, the paper reads closely the major episodes related to the experience of female circumcision in Africa and the search for psychological healing in Europe and the United States and highlights that the novel's campaign against a problematic aspect of traditional African culture represents a serious literary and political challenge, contributing to a (de)mystification of romanticized African-American representations of Africa in Alice Walker's most African and most didactic novel.

Cultural studies

1. Adrian Poruciuc – *Tattooing as “Script”*

2. Codruț Șerban – *A Body Not-so-Divine: Rape, Power and Same-Sex Sexuality in Early Colonial America*

3. Daniela Doboș - *Descriptions of the Body: Violence in the Subcultures of Contemporary Romanian Youth*

For a long time, with few exceptions, Romanian linguistics took no interest in native slang, but after 1990 this has made a dramatic comeback in more than one way. One of the crudest versions of new slang, with touches of violence and licentiousness, turning the unsayable into sayable, is that currently used by young Romanians. It has been justly argued that such linguistic outlet came as a logical consequence, after the demise of communism, of the former censorship and wooden tongue. Starting from John Gumperz's notion of ‘speech community’, the paper sets out to put this oft-deplored linguistic phenomenon into perspective and analyse the main linguistic means employed in shaping it up.

4. Lorelei Caraman - *Gentle War and Violent Peace: The Sugar-coated Language of Western Military Intervention.*

Although the mere mention of the word “violence” stirs public condemnation, what happens when violence *seems* universally justified or government-sanctioned? And can violence be justified at all? Can we speak of clear cut lines between aggressor/defender or invasion/humanitarian intervention? What are the different (or, better said, *double*) standards we use to condone or to reject violence? This paper sets out to explore the “softened version”, or, to use Baudrillard's terminology, the hyper-real dimension of modern war, in which violence can be sold to the public opinion, paradoxically, in the guise of its opposite. Common

clichés (*humanitarian bombing, collateral damage*) show the role of linguistic tools in creating the appearance of a gentle, justified, *soft violence*. However, the analysis goes beyond the abstract-theoretical level and examines several factual historical and political examples. The most illustrious example is that of the 78-day NATO “*humanitarian bombing campaign*”/war on the Former Republic of Yugoslavia (present-day Serbia). The consequences of Western military intervention in that area still linger today. The paper also reviews the positions and arguments expressed by several key intellectuals such as Noam Chomsky, Edward Said or Harold Pinter, as well as the illuminating observations of professionals with firsthand experience of the war, such as independent war-correspondent journalist Robert Fisk. As a result, a new moral dilemma becomes apparent: How do we deal with (multi)state-organized violence or with the media/political apparatus employed to endorse and “sugar-coat” aggressive military actions? This dilemma brings new questions to the very definition of violence: *What happens when violence is “packaged” and “sold” in the form of peace; when the roles of the aggressor and the victim are blurred? And how can we tell them apart?*

5. Marius-Bogdan Tudor - *The Underlying Violence of Nonviolent Direct Action: Martin Luther King Jr. and Civil Disobedience*

One of the most complex issues of the actions and writings of the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. was the contradictory nature of the foundational concept of the Civil Rights Movement: nonviolent civil disobedience. The mechanisms of the doctrine are explained in Dr. King's writings, where militancy and passive resistance are complementary terms that intertwine and by no means cancel each other out. The aim of my paper is to discuss the rhetoric and literary ability of the most significant conceptual writings of Dr. King ("Letter from a Birmingham Jail", "Why We Can't Wait" and "Behind the Selma March") in relation to the multifaceted doctrine of civil disobedience and to point out the paradoxical nature of nonviolent direct action, a tactic which inherently involves a certain degree of justifiable violence. The fine line between nonviolent action and violent civil turmoil is thus blurred to an even higher extent and the late compatibility which Dr. King finds between Black Power and the Christian precepts which framed his nonviolent endeavor can serve as groundwork for understanding the theory and action of civil disobedience in today's social and ideological climate.

6. Cristina Gavriluță, Mihaela Frunză – *Agresivitatea contemporană. O perspectivă antropologică*

Ideea centrală a acestui studiu este aceea conform căreia agresivitatea umană contemporană are o dublă perspectivă: una de natură antropologică (studiile de antropologie și etologie sunt un argument în acest sens) și una socio-culturală. Cea de-a doua perspectivă pe care am dezvoltat-o ne demonstrează că existența unui decalaj între dezvoltarea culturală și civilizațională a omului contemporan există un decalaj care poate explica creșterea agresivității. Așadar, mijloacele pe care le pune la dispoziție civilizația contemporană se pot transforma în resurse ale agresivității în măsura în care ele nu primesc un sens sau justificare culturală.

American literature II

1. Irina Chirica - *Conquered Landscape*

2. Alina Anton - *Invading the female body: Skewering the Silence in Nora Okja Keller's **Comfort Woman***

The paper examines one deeply disturbing act of violence and violation perpetrated against a large number of Korean women during WWII, as it is rendered through the fictional lens of Korean American novelist Nora Okja Keller. Sold from a young age into sexual slavery inside a Japanese military brothel, Akiko 41 – the mother protagonist of Keller's debut novel *Comfort Woman* – speaks from within her own body for the traumatic experience of an entire group whose voice was almost muted by mainstream history. Following a theoretical exploration of violence and its representation in literature, the article briefly reviews historical data, and then goes on to focus on the legacy of pain left by violence, the repression of past wounds as a way to escape pain and the splintering effect this repression has on the mother-daughter relationship in the analyzed novel.

3. Anca-Luisa Viusenco - *Violence through the Lens of Innocence: Reflections on Alice Walker's "The Flowers"*

In a world in which both virtual and actual violence are capitalized on as sources of entertainment, in which the media is so saturated with violence that we need it to offer us ever-increasing doses of the latter so that we can exit our state of moral numbness and react to it, in which even the most horrific acts of violence

leave most of us passive, as we regard them as nothing more than a sign of our troubled times, recognizing and taking a stand against the subtle forms in which violence manifests itself have become real challenges. As a result, I chose as starting-point for the present paper a literary piece in which violence is not presented overtly, but only suggested, and not experienced, but witnessed, and only through its outcome – death.

In only two pages charged with symbolism, Alice Walker depicts the abrupt (thus, one might say, violent) coming-of-age of a little girl suggestively named Myop, who stumbles upon the decayed corpse of a lynched man while happily gathering flowers in the woods on a summer day, and who, in spite of her efforts to cling to the innocence of her carefree childhood, finds herself relating to the tormented history of her race, for, despite the most likely intentional vagueness of the story in terms of the background of the characters (if such a term may also be applied to a corpse), a vagueness which renders its message universal, there are several clues pointing out to the African-American ethnicity of the latter and their socio-economic status as sharecroppers in what is probably the mid-twentieth century rural South. It is a child's rite of passage into the grim reality of adulthood, an initiation into a world where there is no place for flowers and songs under the warm summer sky, but only for intolerance and bloodshed. It is a story about the heritage of violence we pass down to our children, as beautifully-written as it is shocking.

The present paper follows Myop's transition from the state of innocence to that of awareness, dwelling on the imagery of the story, and discusses the effects of witnessing violence or its outcomes (death, mutilation, psychological trauma) upon young minds, for "The Flowers" deals with both a wounded body and a wounded mind.

4. Sorina Maria Ailiesei - *Deciphering Patterns of Violence and Wounds of Selfhood in Amy Tan's Work*

The symbolism that surrounds the woman's body, investing it, against her will and consent, with meaning and value derived from patriarchal social structures and ideologies, is reinvented, reinscribed and perpetuated in the immigrant feminist literature. The position of victimized women in Chinese patriarchal culture that privileges the Confucian ideal, raising them to be passive and silent in their roles as daughters, wives and mothers is one of Amy Tan's main concerns in exploring peripheral female figures. Tan portrays the tragedy of disenfranchised women trapped in a domestic chaos, impelled to endure spousal abuse and marital rape, subjected to commit abortion or suicidal acts. Thus, Tan's women are forging identities beyond the pictures of polygyny and bound feet, balancing hyphenation. In achieving balance, voice is important. Hyphenated women must engage in an archetypal journey to self-exploration, recognition, and appreciation of themselves and their culture. I will argue how the constructions of female identities in these texts are deeply embedded in these narratives of violence, focusing the problems inherent in this trope that seeks to transform victimhood into a species of heroism or agency through the further self-mutilation or destruction of the victim herself. The rhetoric of heroism camouflages the fruition of the most destructive form of patriarchy, forcing the woman to shoulder the burden of righting a wrong perpetrated by men and systems beyond her control. Tan's texts set out analogies between war/sex crimes, military/domestic violence, between mythical, literary and historical Chinese women going towards understanding a typical feminine form of oppression.

5. Simona Mitocaru - *Shattered Identity and Violence in Sam Shepard's Plays: a Question of Ambivalence*

The paper explores Sam Shepard's ambivalent attitude towards physical and emotional violence. His plays "reflect both an abhorrence for and fascination with it, and with the menace which may lead to it." (Bachman 163). Nevertheless, at the family level, physical violence serves as an amplifier of the real violence, the one within each individual, the violence of passion and of psychic disintegration. In Shepard's drama, the tumult of beatings, shoutings and shootings, the obvious disrespect between spouses, siblings, parents and children implies a more powerful trauma, that of the characters' shattered identity, of their inability to connect with the others whose presence they desperately need. Moreover, they are denied evolution, Shepard's characters live a "trauma (which) is re-enacted at every moment. Nothing is truly buried. No wound is really healed. No memory is fully purged, no error expiated." (Bigsby 19)

6. Pascariu Lucia-Hedviga - *Performing Violence in Edward Albee's The Zoo Story*

In their book, *Violence: Theory and Ethnography*, P. Stewart and A. Strathern consider violence as "either destroying order or creating it" depending on one's position and the context in which they find themselves. With this article we try to explore the possibility of performing violence as a creative act, as structuring order in a play pertaining to the absurd theatre. There is an ambiguity to violence that one must clarify in order to fully understand it: as a performative act, violence addresses not only the protagonists but also the public, who becomes part of the violent process. Is the spectator dehumanized or on the contrary he feels

more human than ever, as in front of him, the players “speak” the primal, savage language of violence? We consider that in Albee’s play, violence has a certain structure; it follows a set of principles, which we will try to explain and understand as giving meaning to the performance of violence on stage.

We start with the premise that violence is a language, and as any language, it constructs reality, it shapes the world of the play, thus becoming a sort of silent demigod, a narrator of the brutal. In addition to the structuralist approach to violence, we will also envisage the possibility of violence as a system of cultural existence within this play: every strata of society has its own violent rites to play out, its own mode of primal expression and being. Using David Riches idea of violence constructed as a pyramid made up of three categories (performer, victim, and witness), we will attempt to establish which category belongs to each protagonist, also including the public. Is violence creating order? Is it destroying it? What kind of order are we talking about? What does violence actually destroy in Albee’s play? Why violence as a system of cultural existence? Why violence as structure and a performative act? Why violence at all? These are the questions that we want to find an answer to.

Film studies

1. Odette Blumenfeld - *Horrific Violence in Silviu Purcarete’s Staging of Titus Andronicus and in Julie Taymor’s Adaptation*

2. Ilinca-Miruna Diaconu - *Psychological Violence in Tengiz Abuladze’s Repentance*

This paper investigates the ways in which the film *Repentance* (1984) by Georgian director Tengiz Abuladze depicts the psychological dimension of political oppression. Starting from the assumption that violence can be psychological as well as physical, my essay analyzes the series of cinematographic tropes present in Abuladze’s work which portray the harmful effects of totalitarianism upon the individual’s psyche. Drawing on the opposition between the characters Abel and Guliko Aravidze (Avtandil Makharadze and Ya Ninidze), and especially Varlam Aravidze (Avtandil Makharadze), on one hand, and the Barateli family (Zeinab Botsvadze, Ketevan Abuladze, Edisher Giorgobiani), on the other, my paper attempts to demonstrate this film’s value as a symbolic representation of the atrocities inflicted upon the Georgian people (and, by extension, upon individuals within the former Soviet bloc) by communist dictatorship. While examining the psychological aspect of political persecution, I focus on the suppression of personal freedom, religious faith, historical memory and communitarian harmony as means of depersonalizing, silencing, and, consequently, subduing the individual. The ultimate purpose of this paper is to reveal the political value of art, specifically film, as an avenue of dissent from an established political discourse.

3. Ileana Chiru-Jitaru - *Amending codes of violence from page to screen: The Color Purple*

As canonic texts with their own identity of violence, Alice Walker’s and Steven Spielberg’s *The Color Purple* echo inflictions of patriarchal savagery on the black woman in various degrees. The present paper will investigate alterations of such codes in the transition from novel to film. More specifically, the analysis of structural sequences will examine which of Roland Barthes’s cardinal functions and/or catalyzers and of Vladimir Propp’s character functions are carriers of violence on page and on screen.

4. Gianina Roman - *The Urban Shift of the Western: Inscriptions of Violence in Cormac McCarthy’s No Country for Old Men*

The aim of this paper is to analyse of the function(s) of violence in Cormac McCarthy’s novel *No Country for Old Men* as well as in its 2007 highly praised screen adaptation. The analysis of the use of violence in these works starts from the premises of the embedded, inherent violence of the *western* genre, seeking to speculate on its contemporary developments and adjustments as well as on its conflicting conventions. “Collapse” seems to be the leitmotif of the novel as it defines both the structure and the substance of this modern western that, infused with elements of detective fiction—an unsolved crime, moral ambiguity, violence, and an action-driven narrative, epitomizes the urban shift of the genre.

As for the movie, in the hands of the Coen brothers, violence becomes the central character. As one movie reviewer put it, *No Country for Old Men*, “a genre exercise”, “doesn’t celebrate or smile at violence; it despairs of it. This intense, nihilistic thriller tells the story of stolen drug money and the horrific carnage it precipitates. The Coens escort you through a world so pitilessly bleak that, as one character says,

you put your soul at hazard to be part of it.” The paper will also briefly tackle issues connected to the conventions of the western genre so as to delineate a context for the centrality of stark violence in the modern western.

5. Veronica Popescu – *Scars of War: Kathryn Bigelow’s The Hurt Locker* (2008)

Since 2003, the war in Iraq and the “Operation Iraqi Freedom” have been in the news each day with combat violence, destruction, suicide bombings, soldiers and civilians killed and maimed, towns and villages wiped out or scarred by explosions, all in the name of the “War on Terror”, of freedom and democracy, of religious difference, of revenge and retaliation. Seven years into this war, the daily reports on the casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan have become, in the words of a US army private, “a reality show everybody’s bored of.” Images of maimed bodies and corpses lying in the dusty streets of a Baghdad in ruins do little more than make one change the channel or scroll down the page. While actual violence leaves deep scars on the bodies, minds and souls of those involved, US military or Iraqi civilians, virtual violence projected on TV screens or shown in cinemas across the world may win reporters and film makers important prizes, but they fail to have the impact they had seven years ago.

Kathryn Bigelow’s thrilling war movie *The Hurt Locker* (2008) is no exception, in spite of the film’s success at the Golden Globes and the Oscars. What this paper aims to explain is how, in spite of all inaccuracies and somewhat oversimplified portrayal of its protagonists, the film finds the right tone and makes full use of the medium’s potential to create suspense, tension and to address, with well-controlled emotionalism and without the classical war movie jingoism, the questions of war heroism and physical and mental vulnerability of those in the first line, fighting an enemy that uses the most perfidious war tactics such as human bombs and radio-controlled IEDs (improvised explosive devices). Moreover, the claim made in this analysis of the film is that the film is subversive in a way that seems to have escaped most reviewers, which saves it from being just another Iraq war movie, though the question whether it is indeed Oscar material still remains open.

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