Hosted by the School of English at the University of Nottingham

The English Showcase

Friday 23rd March 2018

10.30am-5pm

Senate Chamber
Trent Building
University of Nottingham

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The English Showcase 2018

The English Showcase celebrates the research produced by final year Undergraduates and Master's students in the School of English at the University of Nottingham. Students from all disciplines in the School are invited to present any aspect of their work, ranging from dissertations to essays and creative writing. We have built on the success of previous events and this year are pleased to host a full day conference to showcase the brilliant work of our students, of whom we are very proud.

The variety of work here showcases a fabulous range of disciplines and working practices and will be an inspiring, informative and enjoyable event to celebrate our students and their hard work during this academic year.

The Organising Committee: Harriet Lander, Sunita Tailor, Rebecca Peck and Emily Dawkes

Programme

10:30	ARRIVAL AND REGISTRATION
11:00	WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION – PROFESSOR SVENJA ADOLPHS, HEAD OF SCHOOL
11:00	PANEL 1: LITERATURE AND SOCIETY Chair: Dr Helen Buckler
	Tianna Johnson, 'Decolonising the Curriculum in Modern Cultural Identity in Literature'
	Harriet Benwell, 'Fake Therapy: An analysis of the extent to which a television talk-show adheres to the conventions of therapeutic discourse'
	Jack Taylor, '"Is the music calling for a river of blood?" Political engagement and the possibility of social change in The Clash's *Sandinista!* and Vampire Weekends' *Contra*'
	Q&A
12:00	PANEL 2: ATTITUDES TO GENDER Chair: Dr Luke Collins
	Ruby Hawley, '"A token of gender balance or national symmetry"; Susan Ferrier's Reputation and Contextual Literary History: 1818 – 2018'
	Jon Petre '"Whatever they say I am, that's what I'm not": The Provincial Spaces and Fractured Identities of the Angry Young Man'
	Henry Hempstead, 'Masculinity in *Ulysses*'
	Q&A
12:45	LUNCH

13:45	PANEL 3: (RE)SHAPING A TEXT
	Chair: Dr Steven Morrison
	Alex Sutherland, 'Beowulf as a Juridicial Figure: A recasting of the Grendel episode'
	Kathryn Bullen, 'The Nature and Significance of the Lincoln Thornton Manuscript (*Lincoln Cathedral Library MS91*)'
	Amy Wilcockson, 'Taboos, Titillation and Transgression in the Poetry of Lord Rochester'
	Callum Walker, 'How do Directors use the Performance of an Execution in Macbeth's Death Scene in Shakespeare Film?'
	Q&A
14:45	BREAK
15:00	PANEL 4: CREATIVE/CRITICAL
	Chair: Dr Steven Morrison
	Annabel Wearring-Smith, 'Pandaemonium: A Graphic Novel'
	Isobel Sheene, 'You'
	Andrea Bowd, 'Panaceas'
	Q&A
15:45	CLOSING REMARKS – DR STEVEN MORRISON
16:00	WINE RECEPTION
17:00	END

Abstracts

Speaker: Tianna Johnson (English with Creative Writing | BA Hons)

Paper title: Decolonising the Curriculum and Modern Cultural Identity in Literature

Abstract: This presentation is an exploration of what 'valuable' literature aided by Arthur Golden's *Memoirs of a Geisha*. The study considers canonical principles and, how up until undergraduate level in the discipline of English study, the National Curriculum has contributed to the construction and preservation of canon. The topic becomes progressively more important as there is a steady increase in the number of people of colour being admitted into higher education. Decolonising the syllabus is the first step to acknowledging that education, especially by the undergraduate level, should encourage self-reflection and self-understanding. This is something wholly impossible if one's identity is not reflected in the curriculum. In an increasingly diverse Britain an understanding of a range of cultures is key to accessing past and present day British culture. These cultures are nuances of how we consider text and create a timeless approach to how English literature is taught and studied.

Panel 1: Literature and Society

Speaker: Harriet Benwell (English | BA Hons)

Paper title: Fake Therapy: An analysis of the extent to which a television talk-show adheres to the conventions of therapeutic discourse

Abstract: Television talk-shows capitalise on mounting intrigue surrounding the disclosure of personal problems and can even be considered a form of health communication by some. This presentation examines a segment of *The Tyra Show* to consider the legitimacy of talk-show "therapy" in raising awareness and offering guidance, in contrast to the spectacle of highly personal issues for the purposes of entertainment. Using an interactional sociolinguistic approach, this presentation will show that the programme *appears* to offer helpful interventions to, in this case, 'cure' a guest of her fear of gnomes. The analysis will closely examine the features of Tyra's interactions with guests, as well as purported health professionals, to critically consider the text as an example of 'semi-institutional discourse'. Through the examination of topic control, self-disclosure, metaphor, questioning and collaborative talk, I will argue that the participants in the show present a consensus on the value of their intervention, creating a therapeutic façade for the viewer to buy into. Continuing, I will argue that the drive for 'infotainment' and the TV spectacle compromises the quality and degree of information being offered. Ultimately concluding that therapeutic features are incorporated into talk-shows, but therapy is not their fundamental aim, as the desire to 'cure' comes second to entertainment.

Panel 1: Literature and Society

Speaker: Jack Taylor (English | BA Hons)

Paper title: 'Is the music calling for a river of blood?' Political engagement and the possibility of social change in The Clash's *Sandinista!* and Vampire Weekend's *Contra*

Abstract: Despite being produced in different decades and on different continents, *Sandinista!* and *Contra* share much. Both take their names from political parties in Nicaragua, with the CIA-backed Contra party eventually replacing the socialist revolutionaries of the Sandinista party, who took power shortly before the release of the Clash's album. While the Clash have been held up as a socially important and politically engaged band, the same cannot (yet) be said for Vampire Weekend. However, I hope to demonstrate through my analysis that Vampire Weekend are commenting upon many of the social and political ideas that the Clash were three decades previously.

My analysis will take in the work of scholars such as Adorno and Benjamin as I map the texts against their theories of popular culture and its capacity – or lack thereof – to inspire social change. Through comparing two texts from different generations, I hope to show the repetitions inherent in capitalism – mainly war, recession and neo-imperialism – while showing the vital role of mass popular culture in exposing such realities. As works of music, these texts inhabit a space which is wholly different from any other media, having the capacity to reach millions of people who may otherwise be largely uninterested in art and/or politics.

While the Clash occupied a punk counter-culture space, such a demographic does not really exist within our society today. Instead, I argue that Vampire Weekend are indicative of what has now replaced such an oppositional movement: still young, still revolutionary, but a little less angry.

Panel 1: Literature and Society

Speaker: Ruby Hawley (English Literature | MA)

Paper title: 'A token of gender balance or national symmetry'; Susan Ferrier's reputation and contextual literary history: 1818-2018'

Abstract: In January 2018, across the streets of Edinburgh, an art project projected images of Susan Ferrier literally murdering the critics who overlooked her: this shows that her reputation continues to evolve as new contexts are found for her work. The recovery of this once-successful early nineteenth century Scottish writer demonstrates the subjectivity of literary history and the ways it which it is influenced by context. Twenty-first century efforts to recover Ferrier invoke a feminist context, arguably because of critics' ideological motivations, but the literary canon from which Ferrier has been excluded has itself been shaped by ideological rather than purely aesthetic judgements.

Despite her enormous popularity among her contemporaries, Ferrier was excluded from mainstream literary history until the late twentieth century. The current revival of her reputation exemplifies the impetus within feminist literary history to recover forgotten women writers. My presentation will consider Ferrier's reputation alongside David Perkins' argument that the contexts by which literary works are explained are 'imposed' by critics. I will explore the ways in which Ferrier's reputation has been influenced by the ideas which are applied to her novels. I will explain how assumptions about nationality and gender led to Ferrier being contextualised through comparisons to Walter Scott and Jane Austen. I will then discuss how feminist literary history and changing literary aesthetics have influenced Ferrier's reputation. I will conclude by considering the selective construction of biographical context.

Panel 2: Attitudes to Gender

Speaker: Jon Petre (English | BA Hons)

Paper title: 'Whatever they say I am, that's what I'm not': The Provincial Spaces and Fractured Identities of the Angry Young Men

Abstract: The late 1950's saw the invention of the 'Angry Young Men', a term given by the press to describe a disparate group of young writers and playwrights disillusioned with postwar British life. These included Alan Sillitoe (*Saturday Night and Sunday Morning, The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*), Arnold Wesker (Chicken Soup with Barley), and most notably John Osborne (*Look Back in Anger*). The idea of the AYM as a coherent literary movement has been widely contested, not least by the authors themselves, who variously have accepted or turned away from the label as their careers and their fiction progressed. Many of the AYM shed their political convictions, or else tried unsuccessfully to reinvent themselves or maintain their *enfant terrible* statuses. Nonetheless, there is much that links these writers and their works, particularly in their shared working-class origins and an insistence to speak for a so-called silent majority. My dissertation will aim to understand the source of Osborne, Wesker and Sillitoe's "anger" through their representation of provincial spaces and local, regionalized voices. Clearly-defined, or else specifically indeterminate spaces are used both as a means to represent displacement and as a search for meaningful living in a confusing and rapidly-changing era. I will argue how these representations are employed to construct a more stable and productive identity, against the disintegration of Empire and the decline of British imperialism.

Panel 2: Attitudes to Gender

Speaker: Henry Hempstead (English | BA Hons)
Paper title: Masculinity in *Ulysses*

Abstract: The essay examines preexisting interpretations of *Ulysses* that incorporated Joyce's peculiar treatment of gender roles, and furthers them by demonstrating ways in which the seminal novel can be read as advocating for adopting a universal androgyny; with a particular focus on combating the destructive codes of Irish masculinity which had encouraged the Irish Revolutionary Period. The essay assumes knowledge of foundational *Ulysses* critical approaches, and approaches the text as the unequivocal Irish national epic.

Panel 2: Attitudes to Gender

Speaker: Alex Sutherland (Viking and Anglo-Saxon Studies | MA)

Paper title: Beowulf as a Juridical Figure: A re-casting of the Grendel episode

Abstract: In this paper I am going to be foregrounding circumstances and terminology which present Beowulf as a legal representative. There are specific legal obligations behind Beowulf's presence in Heorot and familial motives for interceding in the case of Grendel. To substantiate the legal framing of the text and Beowulf's presence as a juridical figure, I shall analyse selected words from the text which have a duality of intention, outlining their usage as a legal one.

The character of Beowulf is the fictional embodiment of a Germanic warrior and the culmination of every desirable quality a warrior possesses, yet his office of law enforcement is frequently overlooked. It is important to consider Beowulf as a legal figure because it offers a different interpretation of the text than the widely preferred themes of heroism and religion, instead presenting an insight into the legal system of the time. Surviving law codes from this period are fragmented and inconsistent, however Beowulf provides a wealth of evidence to detail how these proceedings were carried out. The Danish society in Beowulf was breaking apart due to one offender operating outside of the law, and the lack of an authoritative presence in Hrothgar's government meant that Grendel's crimes went unpunished. Beowulf intercedes, and the poet helps provide the legal vocabulary which foregrounds the juridical setting essential to him seeking justice against Grendel.

Panel 3: (Re)Shaping a Text

Speaker: Kathryn Bullen (English Studies | MA Distance Learning)

Paper title: The Nature and Significance of the Lincoln Thornton Manuscript *(Lincoln Cathedral Library MS 91)*

Abstract: Why study the history of the book? This paper will explore the Lincoln Thornton manuscript using the interdisciplinary tools that the history of the book provides, demonstrating the relationship between codex and culture. An investigation of the manuscript will show how form affects meaning, supported by a selection of photographed folios.

When the Yorkshire landowner and amateur scribe, Robert Thornton, compiled a miscellany now known as the Lincoln Thornton manuscript around 1440, his choice of romance, religious and medicinal poetry and prose was originally designed to be circulated amongst his immediate family. The different genres present a 'literary scrapbook' of texts, which unwittingly demonstrates the varied interests of fifteenth century literary culture, as well as providing evidence of works which are now otherwise lost.

Thornton's legacy to manuscript history lies in a personal investment in a distinctive, functional yet organic manuscript, indicating the complexity of the codex as an artefact.

Panel 3: (Re)Shaping a Text

Speaker: Amy Wilcockson (English Literature | MA)

Paper title: Taboos, titillation and transgression in the poetry of Lord Rochester

Abstract: This presentation will focus on the use of various taboos within the poetry of Lord Rochester, including sex (explicit language, homosexuality and bodily fluids), death and disease, religion, social class and the king, and the effect discussing these taboos had on Rochester's reception and reputation at the time of writing. The presentation will attempt to explore each of these in detail and come to a conclusion as to which taboo had the greatest effect on his reputation and why.

Panel 3: (Re)Shaping a Text

Speaker: Callum Walker (English | BA Hons)

Paper title: How do directors use the performance of an execution in Macbeth's death scene in Shakespeare film?

Abstract: The death of Macbeth, one of Shakespeare's greatest tragic heroes, is described in the text as 'Enter fighting, and Macbeth slain'. This brief stage direction has been reinterpreted by the film directors Kurzel, Kurosawa, and Polanski, in their adaptations of the play in a variety of ways. All three use elements of an execution in their adaptations and use Macbeth's death scene as a means of delivering a final statement on the morality of the titular character.

This essay explores the presentation of Macbeth's death scene through an intense close analysis of the scenes. This analysis views shot, setting, and proxemics alongside critical interpretations as a way of interpreting the director's creation of a performance of execution. The analysis is placed within the wider context of the films, both historically for their varied settings and stylistically, the three directors taking considerably different approaches to film making.

Despite similarities in the exploration of execution, Kurzel, Kurosawa, and Polanski all show vastly different Macbeths. Kurzel's is a hopeless man condemned to his fate, Polanski's is a bloody tyrant rightfully killed, and Kurosawa's is a villain who heroically fights for self-determination in a world where his every action is dictated by fate. The sheer variety in interpretation here makes this exploration one warranting further discussion.

Panel 3: (Re)Shaping a Text

Speaker: Annabel Wearring-Smith (English | BA Hons)

Paper title: Pandaemonium: A Graphic Novel

Abstract: There are two components of this creative-critical piece: an original graphic novel and a critical essay on its engagement with Angela Carter's *The Passion of the New Eve* and Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell's *From Hell*. *Pandaemonium* depicts the Adams, a Victorian religious cult who, using Milton's *Paradise Lost* as a doctrine, capture the prostitute Eve to be possessed by Satan. The graphic novel comprehends religion as a set of mythologies. It regards the paradigms of androcentric opposed to gynocentric religion which are thematic in Carter and Moore's work alike, considing, like Carter, the foundational myth on which religion is based. By using *Paradise Lost* to reaffirm the appropriation of Adam and Eve as mythological beings, the graphic novel effected Bloom's theory of clinamen and creative revisionism. Artistic appropriations of Blake and Dore's classic Miltonic illustrations build revisionism into the visual semiotic network in the piece and contextualize the Victorian vision of Satan. The medium of a graphic novel expands the visual scope of Carter's pre-deciphered language, literalizing this interpretive process within an intrinsically hieroglyphic form. Form is essential to *Pandaemonium.* The artistic style of the piece contrasts watercolour, Carter's symbol of fertility, and pen, Campbell's representation of Victorian masculinity, as a comment on potential gendering within the creative medium of a graphic novel itself. The narrative perspective of *Pandaemonium* were constrained by the panelling of the novel, techniques of point of view, frame Eve's experience in *Pandaemonium*, allowing the reader to experience the novel as she does.

Panel 4: Creative/Critical

Speaker: Isobel Sheene (English and History | BA Hons)

Paper title: 'You', a Short Story Inspired by Ali Smith's *Artful* and H. G. Wells' *The Time Machine*

Abstract: My creative piece, entitled 'You', is a short story that primarily draws inspiration from *Artful* by Ali Smith and *The Time Machine* by H.G. Wells. It is a fragmented piece, separated into short sections that represent different moments and various spans of time. It employs the gothic tradition in several ways, including such motifs as the supernatural, dream sequences, and the uncanny, with specific forms of these being drawn more directly from *Artful* and *The Time Machine*.

Panel 4: Creative/Critical

Speaker: Andrea Bowd (Creative Writing | MA)

Paper title: *Panaceas*

Abstract: Within this collection of poems. I have attempted to convey spiritual, emotional and mystical elements of a specific area alongside social, historical and geographical aspects shaped, or connected to, the landscape from which they arise. I am particularly interested in, and have represented, the phenomenon of life after death connected to place and space. For example, a spiritual apparition may only be apparent in the landscape to which they were attached in life.

The landscapes in the collection are not limited to a specific area. I have grouped together those which share the same domain, either realistically or metaphorically. The connection of the poems may become clearer upon reading. Largely, the themes of the poems are conveyed through metaphor and symbolism, designed to parallel the natural and/or spiritual world.

The poems in my collection are influenced by the Imagist Poetry movement (Circa 1914-1919). Although the imagist movement was relatively short-lived, their influence was far-reaching. Indeed, a large amount of imagist poetry provided the basis for similar types of literature which held refreshing intervention, or at least alternative views of a more organic nature: a necessary escape perhaps, from the age of early twentieth-century developments in industry and consumerism.

My poems, therefore, are intended to provide solace, re-connection and rationalisation to the more spiritual, emotional and psychical aspects, conjured or ignited from the immediate landscape.

Most importantly, I hope also that the poems may be enjoyed, and not limited to any original intention or meaning held within them.

Panel 4: Creative/Critical