

**INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON REPRESENTATIONS OF
PANDEMIC IN LITERATURE**

ATATÜRK UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF LETTERS

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

26-27 MARCH 2021

ABSTRACT BOOK

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Call for Papers

International Symposium on Representations of Pandemic in Literature

Deadline for Submissions:

January 15, 2021

Full Name/Name of Organization:

Atatürk University

Contact email:

pandemicconf2021@gmail.com

Abstract proposals for 20-minute paper presentations are invited for a two-day virtual symposium hosted by Ataturk University in Erzurum, Turkey. This international symposium on pandemic and its representations in literature will be held on 26-27 March 2021.

The all-pervading pandemic Covid 19 has hit humanity in all its deadliness and led to an overall chaos having probable signs of future anarchy. Causing mass deaths and putting lives in danger, it has inevitably reminded us of the memories and accounts of past pandemics. Although historical documents and statistical data help us learn about births and growths of pandemics, literature intends to provide us with a humanistic perspective on life after a pandemic and includes accounts of pandemics all reflecting the human condition at such times of deep crises. Albert Camus' *The Plague*, Defoe's *A Journal of the Plague Year*, Ahmed Ali's *Twilight in Delhi*, Jack London's *The Scarlet Plague*, Edgar Alan Poe's *The Mask of the Red Death* and Antonin Artaud's essay "Theatre and the Plague" are some of the many texts that tackle the impact of pandemics on societies as well as unearthing the relation between pandemics and cultural products.

International Symposium on Representations of Pandemic in Literature seeks to illustrate and explore the theme of pandemics as it has been handled in literary works of all kinds. It aims to focus on the problematic relation between pandemics and individuals and societies. The topics that could be explored in the symposium include but are not limited to:

- Pandemic as apocalypse
- Pandemic and loss of human values/moral decline
- Pandemic and politics
- Pandemic and gender
- Pandemic and disability studies
- Pandemic and medical humanities

- Pandemic and psychology/human behaviour
- Pandemic and culture
- Pandemic and ecology
- Pandemic and religion
- Pandemic and crime
- Pandemic and existential philosophy

Abstracts of 200-300 words and a short bio (100-150 words) in Word format should be sent to pandemicconf2021@gmail.com with subject title 'Representations of Pandemic in Literature' by 15 January 2021 for consideration by the symposium committee. Decisions will be announced by 22 January 2021.



**International Symposium on Representations of Pandemic in
Literature**

26-27 March 2021

Symposium Programme

26 March 2021 – Friday

Welcome Remarks and Keynote Addresses	
10.00-10.50	<p>Welcome Remarks by the Head of the Organising Committee</p> <p>Keynote Address 1 – Prof. Mukadder Erkan Lost in the Pandemotopia or...?: Witnessing through Literature</p>
11.00-11.50	<p>Keynote Address 2 – Prof. Claire Chambers Decoronial Writing</p>

Session 1 – 13.00-14.15	
Chair: İsmail Avcu	
Yeliz Biber Vangölü – Atatürk University, Turkey	Taking over the Body and the State: David Hare’s Covid-play <i>Beat the Devil</i>
Tuğba Aygan – Atatürk University, Turkey	A Pandemic of One’s Own: Gendered Impacts of Covid-19 in Sevilay Saral’s <i>A Case Per Day</i>
Kadriye Bozkurt – Manisa Celal Bayar University, Turkey	Reformulation of Liveness and Physicality of Theatre in the Pandemic Period

Session 2 – 14.30-15.45	
Chair: Yeliz Biber Vangölü	
Sabyn Javeri Jillani – New York University, United Arab Emirates	Silenced: Female Representations in South Asian Pandemic Literature
Assia Kaced – Algiers 2 University, Algeria	Trauma and Resilience: The Heroines of Modern Times in <i>Blindness</i> by José Saramago
Florentina Gümüş – Atatürk University, Turkey	Love as Disease in Euripides’ <i>Hippolytus</i> and Tony Harrison’s <i>Phaedra Britannica</i>

Session 3 – 16.00-17.15	
Chair: Mukadder Erkan	
İsmail Öğretir – Atatürk University, Turkey	The Prospect Before Us: Implications of Pandemic Disaster in Jack London’s <i>The Scarlet Plague</i>
Arzu Korucu – Adnan Menderes University, Turkey	The Binary Oppositions behind <i>The Masque of the Red Death</i> by Edgar Allan Poe

M. Fikret Arargüç – Consulate General of the Republic of Turkey in Essen, Germany	
Laura Major – Achva Academic College, Israel	Sickness and Society in Andrea Barrett's <i>Ship Fever</i>

27 March 2021 – Saturday

Session 1 – 10.00-11.15	
Chair: M. Başak Uysal	
Abhinaba Chatterjee – Gurukul Kangri Vishwavidyalaya, India	Revisiting the Absurd Theatre in the Era of Pandemic
Mesut Günenç – Adnan Menderes University, Turkey	Pandemic and Theatre throughout the Ages
Paul Almonte – LCC International University, Lithuania	Rushing to Make Connections: Issues with the Art of Chronicling the Plague

Session 2 – 11.30-12.45	
Chair: Tuğba Aygan	
Madhumita Roy – IEST, Shibpur, India	Science, 'Counter-Science' and Public Health: A Close Reading of Amitav Ghosh's <i>The Calcutta Chromosome</i>
Gi Taek Ryoo – Chungbuk National University, South Korea	Silicosis and Environmental Crisis: Muriel Rukeyser's <i>The Book of the Dead</i>

Session 3 – 13.00-14.15	
Chair: Assia Kaced	
Özge Özgün – Adıyaman University, Turkey M. Başak Uysal – Atatürk University, Turkey	Is the Man-Made Pandemic in Margaret Atwood's <i>MaddAddam</i> an Example of the Eclipse of Reason of Humanity?
Lorenz Hindrichsen – Copenhagen International School, Denmark	Chaucer's Canterbury Pilgrims as Black Death Survivors' Kids

Session 4 – 14.30-15.45	
Chair: Arzu Korucu	
Marinica Tiberiu Schiopu – University of Craiova, Romania	Pandemic, Space and Environment in <i>Blindness</i> by José Saramago
Nouha Aouine – The University of Ali Lounici, Algeria	The Diseased Temporalities of Katherine Anne Porter's <i>Pale Horse, Pale Rider</i>
Naomi Justin John – University of Management and Technology, Pakistan	The Motif of Sacred Spaces in Pandemic: Analysis from Two Life Worlds

Inam Ul Haq – University of Management and Technology, Pakistan	
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Session 5 – 16.00-17.15	
Chair: Kubilay Geçikli	
Md. Abu Shahid Abdullah – East West University, Bangladesh Tanvir Mustafiz Khan – East West University, Bangladesh	Globalisation, Consumerism and Social Isolation: Depicting Pandemic in Emily St. John Mandel’s <i>Station Eleven</i>
Baturay Erdal – Adnan Menderes University, Turkey	Shattering Dietary Taboos in Post-Pandemic Era: Human-Animal Interaction in J. M. Coetzee’s <i>Elizabeth Costello</i>
Amanda Cain – Olympic College, USA	Refusing to be on the Side of Pestilence: A Camusian Ethic for Communities in Crisis

Session 6 – 17.30-18.45	
Chair: Amanda Cain	
Sofia Duarte – University of Valencia, Spain	Margaret Atwood and Speculative Fiction: A Glimpse into a Possible Future Through the <i>MaddAddam Trilogy</i>
Gamze Şentürk – Munzur University, Turkey	Plague as Metaphor in Karel Čapek’s <i>The White Plague</i>
Annabel Castro – Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana- Campus Lerma, Mexico	Senninbari: Evoking the Mexican Perspective of the Current Pandemic through Japanese Literature and Machine Learning

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Keynote Address 1

Lost in the Pandemotopia or...?: Witnessing through Literature

Mukadder Erkan

Atatürk University, Turkey
merkan@atauni.edu.tr

Bio

Mukadder Erkan is Professor of English Language and Literature at Atatürk University. She specialises in nineteenth- and twentieth-century English Novel, and has a keen interest in critical and philosophical writing. She is the author of *Samuel Beckett: İfadenin Arayüzeyi / Arayüzeyin İfadesi | Üçleme'ye Postmodern / Postyapısalcı Bir Yaklaşım* (2005) and *Iris Murdoch: Bir Ahlâk Filozofu Olarak Sanatçının Portresi* (2011). She has also published a wide range of essays on English Literature in different academic journals. Besides, she translated such works on literary criticism and philosophy as Jacques Derrida's *Acts of Literature*, Jorge Luis Borges' *This Craft of Verse* (ed. Calin-Andrei Mihailescu), Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle's *This Thing Called Literature*, Gary Gutting's *Thinking the Impossible: French Philosophy since 1960*.

Abstract

The world's history is full of many pandemics with different biological characteristics such as plague, tuberculosis, malaria, smallpox, cholera, influenza, and HIV/AIDS, SARS. Governments react to pandemics by imposing quarantine, isolation, travel restrictions, and other forms of social control, and they take care of public health more than ever during these periods. Pandemics are dangerous not only to human physiological health but also to psychological and mental health. Lives are disappearing, loved ones are gone, and all our strength, including our imagination, is absorbed by the pandemic. Not only the medical world, but also our political, economic and cultural world in general is affected. Therefore, the effects of the pandemic manifest themselves in the world of art and literature: the manifestations in many forms that have the power to give insight people about what is going on during this kind of crises. It can be said that literature can give on the one hand reckless on the other hand panic-ridden human beings a kind of insight about, comfort in or escape from the diseased world. This study focuses on how epidemics have been handled in selected novels in various literatures from the beginning to the 21st century. Homer's *Iliad*, Boccaccio's *Decameron*, Daniel Defoe's *A Journal of the Plague Year*, Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*, Alessandro Manzoni's *The Betrothed*, Edgar Alan Poe's *The Masque of the Red Death*, Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice*, Jeanette Winterson's *Sexing the Cherry* will be examined through close reading of the texts. As a result, common points regarding the pandemic in these works belonging to different periods and different cultures will be determined. The findings about humanity can give us some hope for our future on earth.

Keynote Address 2

Decoronial Writing

Claire Chambers

University of York, The United Kingdom
 claire.chambers@york.ac.uk

Bio

Claire Chambers is Professor of Global Literature at the University of York, and the author of *British Muslim Fictions* (2011), *Britain Through Muslim Eyes* (2015), and *Making Sense of Contemporary British Muslim Novels* (2019). She has also published a collection of her essays entitled *Rivers of Ink* (2017), and co-authored (with Richard Phillips, Nafhesa Ali, Indrani Karmakar, and Kristina Diprose) *Storying Relationships: Young British Muslims Speak and Write about Sex and Love* (2021). She co-edited (with Caroline Herbert) *Imagining Muslims in South Asia and the Diaspora* (2015), (with Nafhesa Ali and Richard Phillips) *A Match Made in Heaven: British Muslim Women Write About Love and Desire* (2020), and *Desi Delicacies: Food Writing from Muslim South Asia* (2021). Claire is Editor-in-Chief (with Rachael Gilmour) of the *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts.

Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic took many by surprise, ‘dazzl[ing] and render[ing us] immobile’ (Hamid, 2017: 145). To be sure, sober warnings came from China and other countries in East Asia. However, as Ipek Demir shows, these harbingers were ‘underestimate[d]’ by a complacent and ethnocentric West, whose hubris was fuelled by ‘epidemiological neoliberalism’ (Demir, 2020: n.p.). Things should slowly return to some semblance of normality but, to adapt the titles of Sabyn Javeri’s story and that of its parent anthology (edited by Muneeza Shamsie) which collected together post-9/11 Pakistani women’s writing, there is no doubting that ‘the world [has] changed’ (Javeri, 2005; Shamsie, 2005: titles). Covid’s metamorphoses are entrenching inequalities in ways that will be difficult to reverse. Far from being a leveller, the crisis is widening already vast social chasms. Three such fissures wrought by Covid’s metamorphoses are the gender and ethnic pay gap; precarity (Butler, 2004; 2020); and increased fear of the other. Though we are not yet in a ‘postcolonial’ age, the virus has brought dramatic change very quickly, in a way that would previously have been unthinkable.

This paper examines what I am calling decoronial writing. In 2020’s second half, a quartet of women writers of colour, Zadie Smith, Elif Shafak, Arundhati Roy, and Uzma Aslam Khan, published landmark works. Their essays, books, and stories deal at least in part with the global Sars-Cov-2 pandemic and our tumultuous times. Zadie Smith’s *Intimations* is a collection of six essays about 2020, in which she argues that the racism, social injustice and lack of civil rights against which Black Lives Matters campaigns are a kind of virus: unseen, contagious, and hard to recover from. Elif Shafak’s *How to Stay Sane in an Age of Division* concentrates on mental (ill) health in a ‘post-pandemic world’ (2020: n.p.), and the need to listen to the other. Meanwhile, in *Azadi: Freedom, Fascism*, Arundhati Roy writes of fascism and fake news in virological terms, ‘spreading like an epidemic and blossoming in the

popular imagination like a brain-deadening malignancy'. Finally, Uzma Aslam Khan's story 'Now Pray: Notes on a Separation' reflects on the many forms of lockdown immigrants have experienced for years, and how this year's shelter in place orders further complicate that.

Smith, Roy, Shafak, and Khan write to inoculate against the diseases of racism, Hindutva, anti-immigration bigotry, religious/ideological obscurantism, mental ill health, and coercive control within families. Although very different in approach and tone, the four authors explore their story universes, writing, art, and linguistic politics, making a defence of increasingly beleaguered commons across the world. They do this through intimations, the title of Smith's book and Roy's sixth chapter 'Intimations of an Ending', intimately hinting at solutions rather than always mounting full-frontal attacks. These three books and the long short story represent the first real works of 'postcolonial literature' in what seems likely to be an outpouring over the coming years. I will conclude by briefly examining the first postcolonial novel I am aware of, Tabish Khair's forthcoming book *Macrobia*, in which the Danish-Indian author imagines the postcolonial globe ten years after the coronavirus pandemic, in 2030.

Taking over the Body and the State: David Hare's Covid-play *Beat the Devil*

Yeliz Biber Vangölü

Atatürk University, Turkey

yeliz.biber@atauni.edu.tr

Bio

Yeliz Biber Vangölü completed her doctoral studies in 2009 at the University of Leeds, England, and started working at Atatürk University, Turkey as an assistant professor in 2010. She is the author of a monograph on contemporary mask theatre in England and has recently co-edited a collection of essays on contemporary British theatre and politics. She has also published a number of essays that focus both on textual analysis of drama and performance reviews. Her academic interests include feminist literature, contemporary British theatre and mask theatre.

Abstract

David Hare's *Beat the Devil: A Covid Monologue* (2020) is a short play based on the playwright's contraction of the Covid-19 virus in early March. A politically-minded dramatist writing for the contemporary British stage, Hare discusses his experience with the disease in the light of the British government's shortcomings in dealing with the pandemic and taking the necessary precautions. Premiered at the Bridge Theatre in London in August 2020, Hare's account of how he has wrestled with the virus happens to be a swift response to the social and political climate regarding the pandemic in Britain. As the play is structured on a monologue performed by a *single* actor (the renowned Ralph Fiennes in the original production) in the manner of storytelling, it gives a personal account of the disease taking over the body. Nonetheless, it also turns into a political satire of the incompetence of the British politicians in the face of a medical crisis. This paper explores the connections Hare draws between his personal account of the disease and the public experience of it, in an effort to highlight the playwright's critique of the British government.

A Pandemic of One's Own: Gendered Impacts of Covid-19 in Sevilay Saral's *A Case Per Day*

Tuğba Aygan

Atatürk University, Turkey
tugba.aygan@atauni.edu.tr

Bio

Tuğba Aygan is an assistant professor in the Department of English Language and Literature at Atatürk University. She earned her MA and PhD in literature from Atatürk University. Aygan is currently teaching undergraduate classes on literary movements, Greek mythology, film studies and Shakespeare as well as graduate classes on theatre theories. Her research is at the intersection of contemporary British theatre and trauma studies.

Abstract

Covid-19 pandemic has impacted billions of people in varied ways. Recent research shows that the outbreak and the following lockdowns have more significant adverse effects on women's life than that of men. Comprising the majority of health workers, women have been more prone to contracting the virus; due to their gender they have faced increased chores; and many women have become subjects of increasing domestic violence largely due to growing unemployment and financial stress in families. Providing visibility for women and creating forums to discuss their problems, theatre has been one of the most fertile arenas for decades. However, with the advent of the pandemic, theatre-making has also been hit dramatically hard and on-stage performances have been rendered impossible. Notwithstanding, this crisis has also paved the path for exploring the range of innovative strategies. Playwrights, actors, and directors across the globe have challenged the physical barriers by exploring new modes of practices in virtual worlds and have successfully brought together remote audiences through online performances. Written by Sevilay Saral and produced online by BGST Tiyatro, *A Case Per Day* (2020) is one of these creative responses to the current atmosphere. It is a collection of seven stories by seven women from all walks of life and each named after the days of the week. This paper aims to identify the challenges caused by the pandemic and the double burden of women in these compelling circumstances through this online production. It also highlights how both theatre and the internet may create an efficacious forum for women to unleash their anxieties and to make their voices heard.

Reformulation of Liveness and Physicality of Theatre in the Pandemic Period

Kadriye Bozkurt

Manisa Celal Bayar University, Turkey
kbozkurt78@hotmail.com

Bio

Research assistant Dr. Kadriye Bozkurt graduated from Atatürk University, English Language and Literature Department. She completed her MA in English Language and Literature at Atatürk University. She received her doctorate degree from Pamukkale University. She is currently working as a research assistant at Manisa Celal Bayar University and she is interested in English drama, contemporary writings, woman literature and cultural studies.

Abstract

The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic has suddenly struck all humanity and it has dramatically changed the flow of life for all people. This pandemic, which has confined people to their homes and disrupted their daily lives, has also affected the productions of art and literature. Especially theatre, as a genre that requires a kind of social gathering with its actors and the audience, has been substantially in a struggle because of social distances, quarantines, and lockdowns. The precautions and restrictions taken for preventing the spread of the virus have directed theatre circles to reformulate their theatre pieces in accordance with the conditions of the pandemic rather than giving into pessimism. As it is attempted to be exposed in this study, in the time of the pandemic, virtual liveness and virtual physicality have been used as an alternative to conventional liveness and physicality of theatre. Justifying the idea of Professor Philip Auslander, who states in his book *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture* (1999) that “live theatre has become more and more like television and other mediatized cultural forms”, the trends of taking advantage of the technological devices in the pandemic period have led to redefining liveness and physicality considering the changing perception of setting, actor and the audience. This study, by touching upon Auslander’s ideas on mediatized theatre, aims to discuss the impacts of the pandemic on liveness and physicality of theatre and their reformulations.

Silenced: Female Representations in South Asian Pandemic Literature

Sabyn Javeri Jillani

New York University, United Arab Emirates
sjj6@nyu.edu

Bio

Sabyn Javeri is Senior Lecturer of Writing at New York University Abu Dhabi where she teaches Women's Writing and Affiliated Assistant Professor of Literature and Creative Writing at Habib University, Karachi, where she teaches a course on South Asian and Middle Eastern Feminist Fiction. She is the author of *Hijabistan* (Harper Collins, 2019) and the novel *Nobody Killed Her* (Harper Collins, 2017) and has edited two anthologies of student writing titled, 'Arzu Anthology of Student Voices' (HUP, 2019, 2018). Her writings have been published in the *South Asian Review*, *London Magazine*, *Wasafiri*, *Oxonian Review*, *Trespass*, *World Literature*, amongst other publications. Her short fiction has been widely anthologized and she has won the *Oxonian Review* short story prize and has been shortlisted for the Tibor Jones, Meridian, Leaf Books, JLF, Adab and Publishing Next awards. She writes a regular column on the US literary website 3Quarks and for Firstpost and Women's Web, India on feminism. She was born in Pakistan and has lived and taught in the UK, US and MENA. She has a Masters from the University of Oxford and a doctorate from the University of Leicester. Her research interests include postcolonial feminism, South Asian literature and creative writing.

Abstract

Bhagwan Das's *Palgus Ki Churail* translated as *The Plague Witch* (1902); Qudrat Ullah Shahab's *Plague in Jammu* (n/a), and Rajinder Singh Bedi's *Quarantine* (1939) are revered twentieth-century Urdu classics in the genre of realist literature. All three short stories chronicle the horrors of the plague as it spread through the South Asian subcontinent taking innumerable lives into its deadly folds. The commonality which binds the three narratives together is that they are recounted by a male protagonist recalling a tragedy that centers around a female victim, thus raising thematic and critical questions of subjugated gendered representations. With or without the threat of the plague, the women in these stories lead silenced lives, unable to advocate for themselves. Gayatri C. Spivak's seminal essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" is central to this argument as one aims to understand the marginalized representations of these voiceless victims who remain central to the story yet dispensable, and important only as plot devices to strengthen the narrative arc. This essay argues that while these stories carry much importance in the literary history of South Asian fictional representations of past pandemics, the subaltern portrayal of the female characters needs to be reassessed as central to the narrative instead of secondary when reimagined under the light of feminist literary criticism.

Trauma And Resilience of the Modern Hero(ine) in *Blindness* by José Saramago

Assia Kaced

Algiers 2 University, Algeria
 assia.kaced@univ-alger2.dz

Bio

Dr. Assia Kaced is an assistant professor at Algiers 2 University in Algeria where she has been a faculty member since 2004. She is also the head of a research team on Algerian and comparative literatures. Her research interests lie in the area of comparative literature studies, colonial and post-colonial studies, and gender studies. She has published many articles in the field.

Abstract

When Covid-19 was first detected in December 2019, it was described as ‘A Serious Threat to Humanity’ that risked disrupting everyone’s life. However, no one ever thought that our perception of things, our beliefs and values, and our view of the future would be turned upside down. The speed with which the virus spread has caused terror among us since we feel unable to protect ourselves and our cherished ones from a pandemic that is spreading beyond control and taking thousands of lives on its way. Fortunately, in the middle of such a chaotic situation has emerged an army of heroes and heroines, composed of doctors and nurses who have been willing to take charge of the contaminated people despite the risk of contagion and death they face every day. Their dedication and sacrifice offer a glimpse of hope in the path of our uncertain future.

The uncertainty and fear caused by the lack of knowledge about a new spreading virus are the main themes in José Saramago’s novel *Blindness* (1995). In the novel too, a pandemic sweeps the city and threatens to turn everybody blind. The government decides to counter the spread of the disease through the isolation of the contaminated people. The latter are led to a mental hospital where they are left by themselves and kept under high surveillance. In the hospital, however, conventional social rules no longer apply and moral values are corrupted. The new ‘blind’ patients live a traumatic experience. Subject to forced confinement, maltreatment, malnourishment, violence by other inmates, they have no alternative to escape their predicament than to depend on the help and guidance of a female character who shares their plight and fights against the fragmented and dislocated world in which they find themselves. In the same way as the healthcare workers in our ‘new’ life, the doctor's wife in Saramago’s novel finds enough strength to help the blind people in the hospital and save her community from corruption. Her resilience and capacity to respond to the predicament of the hospital inmates, despite all odds, make of her a heroine worth admiring.

In my presentation, I aim at shedding light on how *Blindness* as a literary work mirrors human behaviors and feelings at times of extremes situations. I also aim at highlighting the work of hero(ines) of modern times who are willing to sacrifice their lives for the wellbeing of their community.

Love as Disease in Euripides' *Hippolytus* and Tony Harrison's *Phaedra Britannica*

Florentina Gümüş

Atatürk University, Turkey
fbadea13@yahoo.com

Bio

Florentina Gümüş is currently a PhD student at the Department of English Language and Literature, Atatürk University, Turkey. She completed her MA studies in Turkey as well, at Karadeniz Technical University, with a thesis on English and Turkish translations of homoerotic poems written by the Greek poet Constantine P. Cavafy. She graduated from the Department of Philology, University of Ioannina, Greece. She aims at integrating this classical background, particularly Ancient Greek Drama, in her current research in Contemporary British Drama, through theories and concepts related to adaptation, culture, psychology, and feminism. During her postgraduate studies she presented a number of papers in international conferences, both in Turkey and abroad. Together with a passion for academic research, she is also an enthusiastic learner of foreign languages, her mother tongue being Romanian.

Abstract

This paper discusses the way love is portrayed as a disease by two playwrights separated by two and a half millennia, Euripides and Tony Harrison. What their plays, *Hippolytus* and *Phaedra Britannica* respectively, share is the fact that they deal with the story of Phaedra and her love for her stepson Hippolytus. Euripides' *Hippolytus* (428 BC) can be regarded as a play born out of the plague which devastated Athens in 430 BC. Seen in this light, it is not surprising that Phaedra experiences love as a kind of disease or *nosos*, with physiological and psychological symptoms. Both Phaedra and the people around her recognize these signs as manifestations of a terrible disease and the language of the play rests on medical language. The reaction of Hippolytus, the object of Phaedra's passion, to her confession of love reveals his fear of *miasma*, of being polluted by her love. Moreover, a shared aspect of the plays is Phaedra's concern that what she feels for Hippolytus is a hereditary disease, transmitted on maternal lineage. This essay argues that in Euripides' play, Phaedra's love is presented as a punishment for Hippolytus' disregard for Aphrodite, the goddess of love and passion, whereas in *Phaedra Britannica*, which is set in British India, her love is presented as a result of the suffocating weather of the colonized territory, not suitable for the white wives of the colonizers. Although Harrison's immediate source is Jean Racine's version of the story, the setting of *Phaedra Britannica* creates an atmosphere closer to that of Euripides' plague-born tragedy.

The Prospect Before Us: Implications of Pandemic Disaster in Jack London's *The Scarlet Plague*

İsmail Öğretir

Atatürk University, Turkey
iogretir@atauni.edu.tr

Bio

İsmail Öğretir received his BA in English Language and Literature from Ankara University (1978), MA in TEFL from University of East Anglia (1985), and Ph.D. in American Literature from Atatürk University (1987). He has authored many publications on American literature and language teaching as well as publishing translations of Anthony Giddens' and Gilles Deleuze's works. Among his publications are, "Background to Communicative Language Teaching", "Dictation as a Testing Device", "Yoknapatawpha'dan Sarı Özek'e: Bir Karşılaştırma Denemesi" (in Turkish), "From the Pasific Coast to Steppes of Central Asia: A Comparative Study on John Steinbeck's *The Pearl* and Chingiz Aitmatov's *Farewell, Gulsary!*", "African-American Literature as a Writing of Becoming-minority: A Deleuze-Guattarian Approach". He has attended various seminars and conferences on American Literature, English Language, and Literature and Methodology and taught American Literature and Methodology to both undergraduates and graduates at the English Department, Faculty of Sciences and Letters, Atatürk University. He is currently a Professor in the same department.

Abstract

The Scarlet Plague may not be one of Jack London's best works but it is worth mentioning for two reasons: One, and foremost, it is a novel with post-apocalyptic messages which touch our nerves today. Two, also significant, it includes some prospective clues from his previous works, *The Call of the Wild* in particular, such as Buck's strange dream about a primitive world in which its ancestors and primitive people hunt together.

It is known that London when writing *The Scarlet Plague*, was inspired by Edgar Allan Poe's short story *The Masque of the Red Death*. Naturally, he changed some things; the color turned to scarlet and death to plague and the masque disappeared altogether. He also changed the style because, while Poe was writing in the Romantic period, London wrote at the turn of the century (his first book was published in 1900). Therefore, he preferred to write in a naturalistic style like Stephen Crane. This choice was due to his interest in the working class who tended to be frank and unsentimental so his style is consciously direct and unembellished.

However, reading Nietzsche besides Darwin, Spencer and Marx created chaos in London's mind. He viewed life as a struggle where only the fittest can survive. Accordingly, his works reflected some sort of brutality and violence, but they still contain vivid descriptions and sensitivity to human psychology. Unlike naturalist writers, instead of humans in the city, he narrates people in nature, together with animals, side by side having primitive relations. This paper aims at exploring London's speculations about the possible elementary life after a great global pandemic and his proposals for a better life in *The Scarlet Plague* which especially emphasizes the role of science and people involved in science.

The Binary Oppositions behind *The Masque of the Red Death*

Arzu Korucu

Adnan Menderes University, Turkey
arzu.korucu@adu.edu.tr

M. Fikret Arargüç

Consulate General of the Republic of Turkey in Essen, Germany
fikretararguc@gmail.com

Bios

Arzu Korucu is an assistant professor in the Department of English Language and Literature, at Adnan Menderes University, Aydın where she has been a faculty member since 2008. She completed her undergraduate study in 1995, BA study in 1998 and Ph.D. study in 2006 in the Department of English Language and Literature at Atatürk University. Her research interests lie in the field of analytical psychology, psychoanalysis, mythology, women's studies and 18th and 19th century English novel.

Mehmet Fikret Arargüç received his BA in English Language and Literature at Atatürk University in 1994, and his MA in 1996. In 2002, he obtained his Ph.D. degree in English Literature from the same university. Arargüç worked as an Assistant Professor at Atatürk University until 2018. Since 2018 Arargüç works at the Ministry of National Education. Currently, he is the Education Attaché of the Republic of Turkey in Essen, Germany. His academic interest covers literary and cultural studies, English and American literature.

Abstract

It is an irrefutable fact that the cycle of life continues with the role reversal – and sometimes cooperation – of the binary oppositions. Life-death, health-illness, light-darkness, good-evil, and other binary oppositions accompany us from birth to death with their absolute power capable of directing human life, at times conflicting it and at other times pulling it together. Having turned our lives upside down for nearly one year, the COVID-19 pandemic has a distinguishing feature from the other pandemics which ravaged the world population in the history of humanity. It has created a new binary opposition which consists of living cautiously due to the belief in the severity of the pandemic and living without any precaution in defiance of the disease. This new one, unfortunately, has been creating severely traumatic effects on both human psychology and social life from day one. Being one of the essential motives in literature, binary oppositions appear abundantly also in *The Masque of the Red Death*, a short story by Edgar Allan Poe. Prince Prospero, the protagonist, being the representative of wealth, success, and welfare as his name signifies, challenges the Red Death devastating the country for a long time. Yet, as required by Jung's Enantiodromia law originating from the philosophy of Heraclitus, the Red Death with the masque finds him together with his people and kills them in their castle surrounded by many security precautions at the end of a night full of worldly pleasures. It strongly associates with Jung's Enantiodromia theory according to which the energy of life moves constantly between two

opposite poles and turns back immediately when it reaches one pole. In our study, the aim is to analyze the important roles and meanings of binary oppositions in the aforementioned story and to offer an insight into the recent pandemic concerns under the light of Jungian theories.

Sickness and Society in Andrea Barrett's *Ship Fever*

Laura Major

Achva Academic College, Israel
drlauram@gmail.com

Bio

Laura Major (PhD) is Head of the English Department at Achva Academic College in Israel and also lectures there and at Hemdat Hadarom College in the field of Literature. Her research interests include women's narratives, crime fiction, spiritual narratives, creative writing and Holocaust literature.

Abstract

Andrea Barrett's novella *Ship Fever*, a piece of carefully researched historical fiction depicting the typhus epidemic of 1847 amongst Irish immigrants to Canada, is a powerful look at the mechanisms of an epidemic – not only on a medical level (Barrett's education and interest in science and the history of science are foregrounded in the narrative) but on a moral, social, economic and political plane too. In fact, the story, told from three different perspectives, discloses how the epidemic and the quarantine cause underlying societal issues and attitudes to rise to the surface – a phenomenon we are witnessing in the current Covid-19 pandemic.

The way the narrative subtly uncovers the societal issues activated by the epidemic is interesting enough; my article, however, will focus mainly on how the narrative is constructed of opposing ideological strains regarding gender, class, and medical science that seemingly undermine each other, but together create an ironic perspective on the epidemic and its attendant consequences. For example, the doctors are all male, privileged, and trained in (then) modern medicine, but it is the age-old wisdom – from social isolation to hygienic practices – learned from the grandmothers of the poor immigrant women that is actually adopted and proves effective at the quarantine camp. Informed by narrative theory, the article will show how, as the narrative of the epidemic progresses, the healers become patients and patients become healers and moreover, how one of the lowly immigrants, who is doubly disadvantaged by class and gender – assumes the narrative reins, while the previous dominant voice of narration is humbled and secedes. And thus, the narrative method intersects with social values to make an ideological statement about the epidemic and the society in which it occurs.

Revisiting the Absurd Theatre in the Era of Pandemic

Abhinaba Chatterjee

Gurukul Kangri Vishwavidyalaya, India
abhinaba0000@gmail.com

Bio

Abhinaba Chatterjee holds MA (English & Translation Studies) from Calcutta University & Annamalai University respectively and M.Phil from Delhi University. He has published on diverse topics to include papers on Absurd Drama, Politics of Sequencing Shakespeare's Sonnets, Indian literature in English and translation and Diaspora literature. He has presented papers in National and International Seminars both in India and abroad. He is presently pursuing doctoral research on 'Alternative Modernities of the Absurd Theatre' from Gurukul Kangri Vishwavidyalaya, Haridwar, India.

Abstract

The absurdity created by the present pandemic takes us back to the scenario presented by the playwrights whom Esslin had classified as belonging to the Theatre of the Absurd. As the pandemic spreads fast and the lockdown is imposed with greater severity, forcing the people to stay within their house, we become more and more aware of the absurdity around us. The plays comprising the Theatre of the Absurd depict the apparent unpredictability and meaninglessness of the present pandemic. The absurd strikes by confronting us about the fundamental questions of life, which we do not consider under normal circumstances, that is to say, under horrific circumstances such as that of the world wars. These plays tend to shake us up by holding the 'real' mirror of our lives and depicting the space where we are all alone, despite being surrounded by society and culture. This paper analyses two plays of the Theatre of the Absurd, namely, *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett and *Rhinoceros* by Eugene Ionesco, to understand the nuances of the present pandemic as depicted in these plays and also to understand the way out, suggested by these plays.

Pandemic and Theatre throughout the Ages

Mesut Günenc

Adnan Menderes University, Turkey
mesut.gunenc@gmail.com

Bio

Mesut GÜNENÇ got his B.A. and M.A. at Ataturk University/Erzurum and got his PhD in Postdramatic Theatre. Currently, he is teaching at Aydın Adnan Menderes University. He has published articles especially on Contemporary British Drama in national and international journals. He has published book chapters entitled “Passions of William Shakespeare’s Lesser-Known Characters: Tim Crouch I, Shakespeare” and “Victimized Woman: Sarah Kane’s Phaedra’s Love”, “Kim Daha Çok İngiliz: Jez Butterworth’ün Jerusalem Adlı Oyunu” and a book on David Hare and Post-truth discourse entitled “David Hare’in Oyunlarında Post-Truth Söylem in 2019. He received a Tubitak scholarship and will be at Edinburgh University for his post-PhD studies, which will last six months from March to September 2021.

Abstract

Theatre and epidemics have always been in an uneasy conflict. Theatre, based on action, movement, and screening, was restricted by diseases and epidemics and also served as a mirror by carrying them to the stage. From Athenian society to the Elizabethan era and today, outbreaks, plagues, and communicable diseases caused theatres to be closed and performances to be restricted. The plague was a global problem for human beings and as in the case of Covid 19, plagues abolished social, regional, and racial differences. The emergence, survival, and spread of outbreaks posed a threat to theatres and playwrights, while at the same time the pandemic served as a resource and communication tool for plays that depicted societies that were affected both psychologically and physiologically. In the prologue of Sophocles’ *Oedipus Rex*, Priest tells how the plague affected Thebes. Plague in Thebes at the same time represents the foreshadowing of Oedipus’ fate. On the other hand, Shakespeare used the plague as a metaphorical concept to emphasize how communicable diseases create social and class differences in his plays such as *Romeo and Juliet*, *King Lear*, and *The Tempest*. This study will try to explain the effect of the pandemic on theatre and plays within historical periods and how theatre became a communication tool sharing the same concerns and fears among societies because theatre, which is restricted and closed from time to time, is one of the most effective vaccines.

Rushing to Make Connections: Issues with the Art of Chronicling the Plague

Paul Almonte

LCC International University, Lithuania
paulwalmonte@gmail.com

Bio

A Professor of English at LCC International University in Klaipeda, Lithuania, Dr. Almonte recently completed a tenure as Provost and Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences at the American University of Iraq Baghdad. Prior to that he was Professor and Chairperson of the English Department at Saint Peter's University in Jersey City, NJ, USA. A former Fulbright teaching fellow, he has published on a wide variety of topics and disciplines, including classics and teaching pedagogy, Jane Austen, Jean Anouilh, Bob Dylan, and Thomas Hardy.

Abstract

Not surprisingly, the terrifying global reach of the COVID pandemic saw an immediate response from the arts and humanities, including numerous comparisons to previous depictions of a plague's impact on individuals and societies—from Greek tragedy, through Defoe, to Camus and Sontag. The usefulness and appropriateness of some of these parallels came into question, broadening into deeper discussions regarding how to best chronicle the pandemic. “Museums are not just seeking artists’ works but everyone’s memories—the more personal, the better—in an effort that recalls the repositories of first-person testimony, along with material evidence and historical records, gathered by cultural institutions after September 11. But scholars point to... challenges of depicting an event authentically and from many angles... And, they ask, when everything is an artifact, what is truly important?”¹ What, then, should be preserved or count as a literary, or artistic representation of the cultural moment? What should stand in for our societies’ reactions to the pandemic and who makes such decisions? Museum curators, literary and cultural critics, are all already constructing *our* cultural response, our cultural history. This paper explores specific examples of how certain ‘cultural products’ are being chosen and what messages they are sending or inculcating and what that might say about society (and politics and education) and the role of the arts and humanities in this deeply COVID-impacted and technologically immediate age (where everyone can easily record and present their experience).

¹ Adam Popescu, *New York Times*, 5/26/20. “How Will We Remember the Pandemic? Museums Are Already Deciding”

Science, 'Counter-Science' and Public Health: A Close Reading of Amitav Ghosh's *The Calcutta Chromosome*

Madhumita Roy

IEST, Shibpur, India

mroy@hss.iests.ac.in

Bio

Dr. Madhumita Roy works as an Assistant Professor in the department of Humanities and Social Sciences at IEST Shibpur, India. Her research interests include postcolonial thought and literatures, environmental humanities and urban cultural studies.

Abstract

Western medical science and public health policies and measures, vis a vis their colonial encounter, have been suspects of harbouring imperialist agendas, and biopolitical control. As colonial times have evolved into the era of globalization, public health has become more contested. Racial and religious profiling, immigration, and categorizing of urban rich and poor are issues that impact public health policies of nation-states, which are, in their turn, connected to a global social, cultural, and economic order. In this context, I will read *The Calcutta Chromosome* (1995) by Amitav Ghosh to observe how the author deconstructs the narrative of Western medical science and public health policies to focus on a scientific and medical culture of the subcontinent evolving from ritualistic and mythical practices rather than divorcing with them. In the novel, a 'counter-scientific' Indian cult plays a significant role in engineering the pioneering research on malaria by Ronald Ross, thereby establishing the epistemic cross-currents that existed between the East and the West rather than an epistemic restructuring of the East by the West. In this article, I will look into these complex exchanges of scientific culture and attempt to trace the evolving nature of the public health policies in the subcontinent from colonial times to the emergence of the postcolonial nation-state till the advent of globalization.

Silicosis and Environmental Crisis: Muriel Rukeyser's *The Book of the Dead*

Gi Taek Ryoo

Chungbuk National University, South Korea
gtryoo@chungbuk.ac.kr

Bio

Gi Taek Ryoo is Professor of English at Chungbuk National University, Korea. He has published a number of articles on poetry and science, such as “Cybernetic Warfare: The Cold War Poetics of Elizabeth Bishop” and “Wallace Stevens: Chaos, Complexity, and System of Self-reference.” He is particularly interested in the parallel development of poetry and science in the twentieth century.

Abstract

The Depression era of the 1930s in the United States marked the emergence of silicosis (fibroid phthisis) as a global epidemic. This occupational lung disease caused by the inhalation of crystalline silica dust, however, was shaped by the complex interaction between natural environments, social and economic forces, and technical and scientific innovation. Muriel Rukeyser's poem *The Book of the Dead* (1938), written in the context of the emergence of silicosis, opens up a new vista to understand the complex relationships between social, technological, and political entities that have created toxic environments. This paper draws on scientific ideas of systems theory to illuminate *The Book of the Dead*, which deals with the Hawk's Nest Tunnel disaster (1930–1935) that left hundreds or thousands of workers dead from silicosis. *The Book of the Dead* represents the disaster as a problem of relationships ensued from the dynamic interactions among nature, technology, and society, in a highly technologized and industrialized world. With scientific insights drawn from the systems theory first proposed in 1937 by Ludwig von Bertalanffy, I will investigate how, in *The Book of the Dead*, Rukeyser creates systems that evolve through the interlocking series of human-nonhuman loops, and how such evolution often accompanies unforeseen consequences. The paper demonstrates how the poem embodies the *systemic* nature of the industrial/environmental disaster that emerges through the interactions of nature and matter, culture and technology, and human and nonhuman.

Is the Man-Made Pandemic in Margaret Atwood's *MaddAddam* an Example of the Eclipse of Reason of Humanity?

Özge Özgün

Adıyaman University, Turkey
oozgun@adiyaman.edu.tr

M. Başak Uysal

Atatürk University
mbuysal@atauni.edu.tr

Bios

Özge Özgün was born in Eskişehir, Turkey. She got her bachelor's degree in English Language and Literature Department at Atatürk University in 2007. In 2013, she received her master degree at the same university and department. The title of her master thesis is *Minimalist Elements in Toby Litt's King Death*. In July 2020, she completed her Phd. Dissertation at the English Language and Literature Department at Atatürk University. The title of her thesis is *An Ecocritical Approach to Margaret Eleanor Atwood's Oryx and Crake, The Year of the Flood and MaddAddam Novels*. She has been working as an English instructor at Adıyaman University since 2008.

Mehmet Başak Uysal was born in Malatya, Turkey. He got his bachelor's degree in English Language and Literature department at Atatürk University in 1985. In 1991, he received his master degree at the Foreign Languages Education Department at the same university. The title of his master thesis is *The Meaning of Human Life in Henry David Thoreau's Walden and Civil Disobedience*. In 1998, he completed his Phd. Dissertation at the English Language and Literature Department at Atatürk University. The title of his thesis is *Virginia Woolf's Intellectual Background as Humanist and Feminist Author*. Attending many national and international conferences and publishing various articles and a book on Katherine Mansfield's short stories, Assist. Prof. Dr. Mehmet Başak Uysal has been working at the English Language and Literature Department at Atatürk University since 1999.

Abstract

Margaret Eleanor Atwood, a Canadian contemporary female author, questions the reasons and consequences of scientific studies in terms of pandemic in her *MaddAddam* trilogy. She reveals the effects of a man-made pandemic on human beings and nature, and represents the world after pandemic in detail. Readers can witness both the inner worlds of the characters and the external world by these details, and question the issues related to science, technology, nature, and life. The main reason for the pandemic in *MaddAddam* is shown to be a corruption of humanity in many aspects. Setting off in laboratories, the virus expands throughout the world. At this point, Atwood mentions that the pandemic is borderless and each human being is responsible for the causes. Besides, the virus is distributed by an aphrodisiac named BlyssPluss. What is ironic about this pill is its name, which means bliss. It is clear that people seek pleasure unconscious of their situation in the world and this

unconsciousness brings them to an end. Moreover, the pandemic is represented both as a necessity and as an inevitable end for humanity in the trilogy. On the other hand, after the pandemic, a new life and culture are formed by Crakers (humanlike creatures that are produced in labs) and survivors. Atwood emphasizes the presence of hope and severity of the situation to the reader by using an open-ended plot. This study aims to analyze the reasons and the consequences of a man-made pandemic in *MaddAddam* trilogy, its relation with humanity, and to present an example of the pandemic in literature.

Chaucer's Canterbury Pilgrims as Black Death Survivors' Kids

Lorenz Hindrichsen

Copenhagen International School, Denmark

lorenz.hindrichsen@cis.dk

Bio

Lorenz A. Hindrichsen grew up in Switzerland and trained in medieval and early modern literature at the universities of Zurich and Aberdeen, writing his MA on social codes in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, and his PhD on representations of ethnicity in Shakespeare and Renaissance art (*The Leopard, the Leper and the Lecher: The Code of the Spotted in Colonial Discourse, c.1550-1625*). His main research interest include visual and verbal representations of otherness from the Middle Ages to the Romantic period, ethnicity and race, gender, ecocriticism, trauma theory, and the graphic novel.

Abstract

Despite few overt references to the Black Death (1348-49) or England's 'Second Pestilence' (1360-61), the *Canterbury Tales* (c.1387-1400) offer a compelling psychogram of a diverse community processing massive demographic shifts and lasting intergenerational traumas in the wake of a cataclysmic pandemic. Building on Boccaccio's account of a group of noblemen escaping plague-stricken Florence for a bucolic retreat, Chaucer imagines a motley crew of itinerant first and second-generation survivors who journey towards the shrine of Thomas Becket - the saint "who helped them when they were sick" (General Prologue 18) - while engaging in a storytelling contest, whose uncertain outcome (the work was left unfinished) locks the pilgrims in a state of compulsive narration mimicking their intergenerational trauma. Echoes of the Black Death reverberate throughout the tales, most noticeably in the Pardoner's Tale, whose chronotope and story arc allegorize the plague's lethality and swift transmission. Pandemic archetypes populate the General Prologue in the shape of bogeymen (Cook), fallen socialites (Knight, Prioress), rivaling opportunists (Miller, Reeve), wealthy inheritors (Wife of Bath), corrupt clergy (Pardoner), and utopian visionaries (Franklin). Post-pandemic social change is reflected in volatile social and linguistic codes (notably skewed forms of address), while socio-economic grievances (aired by the 'churls') are delivered through maladaptive child modes reminiscent of trauma literature. Significantly, such egocentric coping mechanisms are regularly countered by visions of collaborative inclusivity (the Host's), mutual altruism (the Franklin's), and genuine piety (the Parson's). Several narrators display a sense of existential dread linked to traumatic experiences (the Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale), and their mediated narrations arguably serve as Chaucer the pilgrim's conduit for processing diffuse affective intergenerational memories. There are thus many ways in which the *Canterbury Tales* explores the remembering, narrativizing, and processing of intergenerational trauma at multiple levels.

Pandemic, Space, and Environment in *Blindness* by José Saramago

Marinica Tiberiu Schiopu

University of Craiova, Romania
marinica.schiopu@gmail.com

Bio

Marinică Tiberiu Şchiopu defended his PhD in Comparative Literature (2019) at the University of Craiova, Romania, under the supervision of Prof. Cătălin Ghiţă. The title of his thesis was *The Buddhist Intertext in Romanian, French and Anglo-American Literatures*. He completed two Bachelor's degrees, one in Philology, the Faculty of Letters at the University of Craiova, and another one in Geography, the Faculty of Geography at the University of Bucharest, in 2012. He also holds a Master's degree in Romanian Literature at the University of Craiova. He published in the area of Comparative Literature and took part in scientific manifestations in Romania, Turkey and India. His academic interests include Climate Fiction, Comparative Studies, Cultural Memory, Distant Reading, Ecocriticism, Geocriticism, Interculturality, Intertextuality and Oriental Studies.

Abstract

Mentioned and praised even by the Nobel prize committee, in 1998, *Blindness* (published in 1995) is a complex novel dealing with human nature and behavior in the context of a crisis generated by a sudden and unknown disease. The relevance of reading this book these days, when the entire humanity (and I daresay our planet as an interdependent system) is facing a terrible viral pandemic, is obvious and helpful. The present paper aims to explore José Saramago's novel from a combined geo-ecocritical perspective, emphasizing the interrelatedness of humanity, space, and the surrounding environment. The main research questions of this study are "How do humans interact with the places they live in and the ecosphere during a pandemic?" and "How does a pandemic affect human behavior?". The geo-ecocritical approach is due to the interdependence between space and environment, one can hardly explore one of the previously-mentioned components of the fictional world without referring to the other. Another aspect that this essay will touch on is the alteration of people's emotions due to the difficulties they face during pandemics and the importance of emotion management in these extreme situations. For the proposed analysis, the following methods will be indispensable: close reading, discourse analysis, ecocriticism, geocriticism, hermeneutics, narratology, and stylistics.

The Diseased Temporalities of Katherine Anne Porter's *Pale Horse, Pale Rider*

Nouha Aouine

The University of Ali Lounici, Algeria

nouhaa.aouine@gmail.com

Bio

Nouha Aouine holds a master's degree in American Literature and Civilization from the University of Ali Lounici. She has written an M.Phil. dissertation that studies the ecocritical representation of the pandemic in the George R. Stewart's novel *Earth Abides*. Aouine has recently presented at the 2020 International Conference on Ecocriticism and Environmental Studies (a presentation on the pandemic's toxic discourse in Jack London's novel *The Scarlet Plague*). Her forthcoming publications include a chapter in an edited anthology on disease narratives. Apart from Ecocriticism and contemporary American literature, she is interested in postcolonial theory, diaspora studies and Foucauldian criticism. She will be discussing her research at the upcoming 30th annual British Commonwealth and Postcolonial Studies Conference and at Dublin City University's Conference on Disabilities, Arts and Sexualities.

Abstract

Fictionalizing a factual disease often requires an inevitable tweaking of temporalities. That is mostly because biological illness creates a distortion within the bodily order; one that often mirrors itself onto the disease narrative's composition. A pandemic that had appeared at the dawn of the twentieth-century detrimental timeline is that which Katherine Anne Porter depicts in her short novel *Pale Horse, Pale Rider*. The Spanish flu, also known as the 1918 flu pandemic, had infringed thousands of cities, reaped millions of souls, and rivaled the First World War in intensity. Few literary pieces sought to capture the miasma, and none managed to do so as accurately and horridly as the work of the infected writer herself Katherine Anne Porter. *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* is a work that plays on the temporal cords of viral deliriums. In it, the author creates different hallucinations and worlds to depict the internal fraught struggle of the diseased mind. This paper reflects on the 'diseased temporalities' of Porter's pandemic narrative. It offers an examination of the narrative's temporal flux. The analysis ultimately reveals that Porter employs such distortion to explore the disease's carry-over effect on narrative formation. Additionally, it shows that Porter's temporal tampering relates the pandemic to both the individual struggle and to the larger body of society because of the narrative's endeavor to entangle the disease with war.

The Motif of Sacred Spaces in Pandemic: Analysis from Two Life Worlds

Naomi Justin John

University of Management and Technology, Pakistan
naomi.john@umt.edu.pk

Inam Ul Haq

University of Management and Technology, Pakistan
inam.haq@umt.edu.pk

Bios

Naomi Justin John works as a Lecturer in the Department of English Language and Literary Studies, Institute of Liberal Arts at University of Management and Technology. Her research area lies in the field of language and translation and she aims to pursue a doctoral program in Language Studies from the University of Helsinki, Finland. She has chaired sessions in APOES and APOES 2.0 as a moderator (APOES: All Pakistan Online Education Summit is a digital platform which conducts talks, seminars, workshops, presentations, and interactions with a global outreach). She is also a member of Google Translate Community and volunteer as an interpreter at Every Nation Centre, Pakistan. Her forthcoming research is about, “The Contribution of Phatic Expressions Towards Gender Stereotypes”.

Inam Ul Haq is pursuing PhD in Sociology from the Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, University of The Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan. He went to the Erasmus Fellowship to Germany as an Exchange Scholar and taught courses in Sociology and took a graduate diploma in Education and Inequality. His research interests include Language, Literacy and Culture. He has 10 publications to his credit and is currently working on his doctoral dissertation on Humor Pedagogies. Presently, he works as a lecturer in the Department of Sociology at University of Management and Technology.

Abstract

The experience of the plague is crucial in the development of new ways of thinking about the prevalence of power and control in the social world. Plague influences state authorities to take extreme measures to control the disease. In the first phase of the study, the narrative world of Daniel Defoe’s *A Journal of the Plague Year* (1722) is analyzed to highlight the theme of power and control by the state and responses of the people, the believers. The nuanced understanding of the process of regulating the church and the worshippers is an important aspect of the study.

In the second phase, the study seeks to understand a similar thematic pattern of state power and control as it has been employed by a church to regulate the behaviors of worshippers in the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. An observation from the mosque during congregational Friday prayers offers a unique contrast to the church during Sunday masses. A church and a mosque from the city of Lahore serve as the site of the empirical study.

The textual world of Daniel Defoe and the first-hand observational accounts of the researchers’ visit to the sacred spaces elucidate that the process of the exercise of power and control in sacred spaces is complex in nature and carries multiple interpretations.

Globalisation, Consumerism and Social Isolation: Depicting Pandemic in Emily St. John Mandel's *Station Eleven*

Md. Abu Shahid Abdullah

East West University, Bangladesh
jwl_abdullah@yahoo.com

Tanvir Mustafiz Khan

East West University, Bangladesh
alokito.bd@gmail.com

Bios

Dr. Md Abu Shahid Abdullah completed his MA in English and American Studies and his PhD in English Literature at Otto-Friedrich University Bamberg, Germany. He is currently an Assistant Professor in English at East West University, Bangladesh. His research interests include trauma, alienation, memory, identity, marginalisation, postcolonialism, eroticism and magical realism. He has published articles on Toni Morrison, Salman Rushdie, Saul Bellow, Angela Carter, Gabriel García Márquez, Jonathan Safran Foer, and Walt Whitman in various international journals. His first book *Traumatic Experience and Repressed Memory in Magical Realist Novels: Speaking the Unspeakable* has been published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing in 2020.

Tanvir Mustafiz Khan is a graduate student at East West University, Bangladesh. He is currently conducting his Masters dissertation entitled *Imagining Utopia within Dystopia in Station Eleven, Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? and Human Acts*. His research interests include posthumanism, cybercriticism, ecocriticism, postcolonialism, neocolonialism, psychoanalysis, feminism, media manipulation and gender studies. He has worked as a Teaching Assistant in the Department of English, East West University and an Intern Sub-Editor in Dhaka Tribune, a national English daily newspaper.

Abstract

The modern world, backed by the marvels of technology and globalisation, makes the individual socially isolated and lonely. While globalisation may be treated as a blessing for the comfort it offers, it is also the reason why the pandemic in St. John Mandel's *Station Eleven* wipes out the global population quickly as the Georgia-flu rapidly spreads via the ordinary miracle of air travel. Throughout the novel, Mandel renders the message that the crisis in the narrative is not just the human conflict against a deadly virus, but also a crisis caused by isolation and loneliness, which in turn makes the human populace desensitized towards the threats posed by the modern society as well as the apparent 'gifts' that it offers. Mandel portrays this dual manifestation of crisis by breaking the time frame of the narrative into two parts—the 'pre-collapse' and the 'post-collapse' worlds. Arthur, Jeevan, Miranda, and Clark's personal experiences in the pre-collapse world of *Station Eleven* gradually reveal why the modern world fails to react effectively to contain the catastrophes—both the deadly pandemic and individual isolation—that occur in the narrative. It is through the discussions between

Jeevan and his friend Hua that Mandel depicts the vagueness of modern living, which both the characters struggle to overcome in their 'next lives' after the collapse of civilization. It is evident from the book that lack of compassion and egoistic barriers between individuals are the dominant reasons why people struggle to unite and react to imminent threats quickly and efficiently. Had the consumerist, pleasure-driven, pre-collapse society of *Station Eleven* practiced compassion instead of competition among individuals, possibly it could have dealt with the Georgia-flu with unity and prevented cruelty in the post-collapse world.

Shattering Dietary Taboos in Post-Pandemic Era: Human-Animal Interaction in J. M. Coetzee's *Elizabeth Costello*

Baturay Erdal

Adnan Menderes University, Turkey
baturay.erdal@adu.edu.tr

Bio

Research Assistant, Dr. Baturay Erdal graduated from Atatürk University, Department of English Language and Literature in 2004. He completed his MA at the same department in Kayseri Erciyes University. He received his Ph.D. from İstanbul Yeni Yüzyıl University in 2019. Following a nine-year lectureship, he currently works as a Research Assistant Doctor at the Department of English Language and Literature, Adnan Menderes University in Aydın. He gives lectures in the areas of green studies and contemporary novels. His research interests also include literary theories, ecofiction and postmodern literature.

Abstract

Many conspiracy theories and worst-case scenarios have been produced about the COVID-19 pandemic and, with a reductionist approach, this new coronavirus disease outbreak has been regrettably confined to the simple matter that humans are exposed to viral pathogens of certain wild animals. However, the global reasons of the present outbreak, as well as its outcomes, should not simply be correlated with the physiologies of a group of animals but with human activities subject to wanton consumption, interference with living spaces, intense commercialization, and, particularly, dietary habits. Thus, reconceptualizing pandemics as a multidimensional 'ecological crisis' posing a threat to the future of human and nonhuman living beings rather than a 'disease' endangering human welfare and economic progress seems to become the sole prerequisite for a major policy shift in the relationship between humans and animals.

With this in mind, the eponymous protagonist of the novel, Elizabeth Costello, a vegetarian like her creator, gives the traces of an ecological philosophy which reinforces the notion that it is not the sheer scientific productivity driven by the rationalization but the reconsideration of animal-human interactions that can prevent post-pandemic era from recurring outbreaks. Her approach problematizes the current understanding of human discourse and action that justifies both the exploitation and the consumption of animals. In the novel, through her understanding of environmental ethics, Coetzee's vegetarian protagonist provides discussions that help to rethink literature as one of the guiding disciplines that can offer new insights into the natural habitat of animal beings. This study intends to handle how Coetzee's thoughts on vegetarianism and human-animal interactions can become a model for the future world in dire need of a post-pandemic paradigm shift.

Refusing to be on the Side of Pestilence: A Camusian Ethic for Communities in Crisis

Amanda Cain

Olympic College, USA
acain@olympic.edu

Bio

Amanda Cain is library faculty at Olympic College in Bremerton, Washington. She earned her BA at Evergreen State College and her MLIS from University of Washington. During her 25 years as a librarian, she has completed scholarship and service in the areas of ethics, literature, librarianship, pedagogy, and the history of reading.

Abstract

In his novel, *The Plague*, Albert Camus offers a framework for decision-making and acting to community members in crisis. This framework, which builds on his earlier writings on the absurd, is based on the human endeavor of seeking meaning in life while admittedly not being able to find meaning. Camus argues that individuals in a community should embrace this contradictory condition, but more importantly, that individuals should attend to each other, even when that attending is absurd. During a crisis of a plague, for example, ‘curing’ one another becomes more important than knowing why we cure. “Ah,” the character Dr. Rieux says of his absurd choice to heal the hopelessly sick, “a man can’t cure and know at the same time, so let’s cure as quickly as we can. That’s the more urgent job.”

As a witness to WWI, WWII, and the Algerian War, Camus stood “face to face with the irrational.” In *The Plague*, he portrays a defense of values among imperiled people—an ethic of responsibility that is born out of rebellion against inevitable annihilation. *The Plague*’s protagonists make ‘we’ rather than ‘I’ the foundation of existence in an absurd world. As such, Camus’ portrayal provides direction for how individuals in communities might act during literal and figurative plagues—economic, political, biological, or a crushing confluence of all of the above.

This paper explores Camus’ embrace of absurd responsibility with respect to one’s community and will conclude with thoughts about our responsibility toward one another on campus during the current crisis of Covid-19. The seemingly insurmountable inequities and traumatization of vulnerable students and staff, the budget cuts, job losses, closures, the nihilism of our national politics, and the illness and death demand an organizational ethic—a Camusian ethic—that accounts for absurdity and action.

Margaret Atwood and Speculative Fiction: A Glimpse into a Possible Future Through the *MaddAddam Trilogy*

Sofia Duarte

University of Valencia, Spain
duarso@alumni.uv.es

Bio

Sofia Duarte is a PhD candidate in the Doctoral Programme in Language, Literature and Culture, and its Applications in the University of Valencia, Spain. Her research revolves around the interdisciplinary field of Animal Studies, a critical framework that in her PhD thesis she is applying for the interpretation of Margaret Atwood's works and the presence of nonhuman animals in them. Accordingly, Speculative and Dystopian Fiction as well as Posthumanism and Ecofeminism are part of her research interests. Furthermore, having worked on the portrayal of animals in the *X-Men* in her Master's thesis, Comic Studies is also an important part of her research line.

Abstract

Dystopian novels are frequently regarded as warnings by the authors of what the future awaits despite oftentimes seen as implausible when published. Classics such as *1984*, *Brave New World*, or *Fahrenheit 451* have reinforced the cautionary aspects of these narratives. An author, who has seen the potential of this genre and underlined what speculative fiction implies, is Margaret Atwood. After the success of her first dystopian novel *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985), Atwood published what is known as *The MaddAddam Trilogy*, which consists of *Oryx and Crake* (2003), *The Year of the Flood* (2009), and *MaddAddam* (2013). Readers discover an eco-dystopian narrative in which civilization has collapsed worldwide and humans are on the verge of extinction due to a widespread virus, the consequences of mass consumption, and a society that is no longer sustainable. However, new species, especially those genetically modified, are rapidly adapting to this new world without humans along with their impurity and excesses. I argue that the trilogy serves as a cautionary tale of the importance of embracing a multiplicity of voices when contemplating the future. Contrary to what readers find in most narratives, it is necessary to go beyond the archetype of the white male saviour by creating characters who manifest diversity in gender, race, class, and species. Throughout the three novels, Atwood illustrates a post-human world and examines a narrative that goes beyond humans by giving voice to the Crakers, human-like animals whose destructive features had been removed and were better adapted to living in the wild, as well as Pigoons, pigs who have been genetically modified to have a human brain tissue. The few surviving humans realize that humanity as they knew it can no longer continue and the rise of this new society is the natural next step in evolution.

Plague as a Metaphor in Karel Čapek's *The White Plague*

Gamze Şentürk

Munzur University, Turkey

gamzesenturk_26_01@hotmail.com

Bio

Dr. Gamze Şentürk graduated from Atatürk University, English Language and Literature Department. She received her PhD and MA in English Language and Literature from Atatürk University. She is currently working as a faculty member at Munzur University. Her research interests include British theatre, gender studies, film studies, and performance studies.

Abstract

Infectious diseases are serious illnesses that have profound effects on people's lives, bringing great destruction and also a great change to their lives. Throughout human history, humanity has struggled against many infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, malaria, leprosy, smallpox, Spanish flu, and AIDS. Under the infectious diseases, people's lives have undergone great changes in social, political, economic, and cultural spheres. Besides the Covid-19 pandemic, which all humanity has fought against today, the plague pandemic, one of the deadliest pandemics in history, has undoubtedly been an important turning point in human history. Known for his theatre play *R.U.R.* (1920), in which the word 'robot' was first used, The Czech playwright Karel Čapek deals with political and social conflicts over the plague pandemic in his play *The White Plague* (1937). The playwright portrays a fascist regime by using the plague as a metaphor in this play. Putting Čapek's *The White Plague* at the centre, this paper aims to reveal the plague as a metaphor based on the world-famous American theorist Susan Sontag's *Illness as a Metaphor: AIDS and Its Metaphors* (1989), which questions the social attitudes towards disease.

Senninbari: Evoking the Mexican Perspective of the Current Pandemic through Japanese Literature and Machine Learning

Annabel Castro

Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana- Campus Lerma, Mexico
a.castro@correo.ler.uam.mx

Bio

Annabel Castro is a digital media artist. Written word and literature are recurring subjects in her artwork as we can see in *Caliban Robot: Artificial Stubbornness Evoking a Shakespearean Character* (Tokio Style in Gothenburg: Röda Sten Konsthall in Gothenburg-Sweden, 2003), *45 letters to the Magnussons before the Spring* (Transmediale: Haus der culturen der welt, Berlin-Germany, 2008) and *Outside in: Exile at Home* (Siggraph Asia: Seoul, South Korea, 2020). She has received the PBEE grant from the National Foundation for Arts and Culture of Mexico, the La Paz award from the International Art Biennial SIART in Bolivia, Object Art first prize from the Third National Biennale Puebla de los Ángeles in Mexico and the Open Territories Commission of mARTadero Culture Center in Bolivia. Her artwork has been shown among other venues at the New Media Caucus Symposium at University of Michigan, Video as an Urban Condition at the Armenian Center of Contemporary and Experimental Art, Yervaran-Armenia and at the Ethnography and Folklore Museum of Bolivia. She has published in the academic journals *Cultural Geographies*, *artnodes* and *Art and Politics of Identity* among others. She is currently PhD Candidate at DXARTS-University of Washington and professor at UAM.

Abstract

Senninbari is the name of a waist sash with a thousand stitches, each one stitched by a different person. To give it as a protective amulet to soldiers going away to war was a common Japanese custom during WWII. It is also the name of an algorithmic video installation that utilizes one thousand Japanese literature fragments referring to doctors. The artwork was premiered at Teopanzolco Culture Center in Mexico on December 8, 2020 and it is on view until February 2021. It is meant to honor Mexican medical practice during the present pandemic. In 1917, Mexico signed a bilateral agreement accepting Japanese medical doctors, dentists, pharmacists, obstetricians, and veterinarians to practice in our country. During WWII, Mexican citizens were removed from their residence, their belongings were confiscated and they were placed in seclusion solely for having Japanese ancestry. Many of the detainees were doctors due to the mentioned agreement. The video artwork visualizes information about these unjustly detained professionals, the classic Japanese literature physicians, and the Mexican contemporary medicine practitioners. Through the use of machine learning tools, the information intertwines and new narratives emerge. In the proposed presentation, I first review the use of the doctor as a character in Japanese literature and the configuration of archetypes through machine learning. Second, I compare the current discrimination of medical personnel with the one taking place during WWII. Lastly, I analyze the video artwork Senninbari, its use of machine learning to construct narratives, and its use of Japanese literature to represent the current pandemic in Mexico.