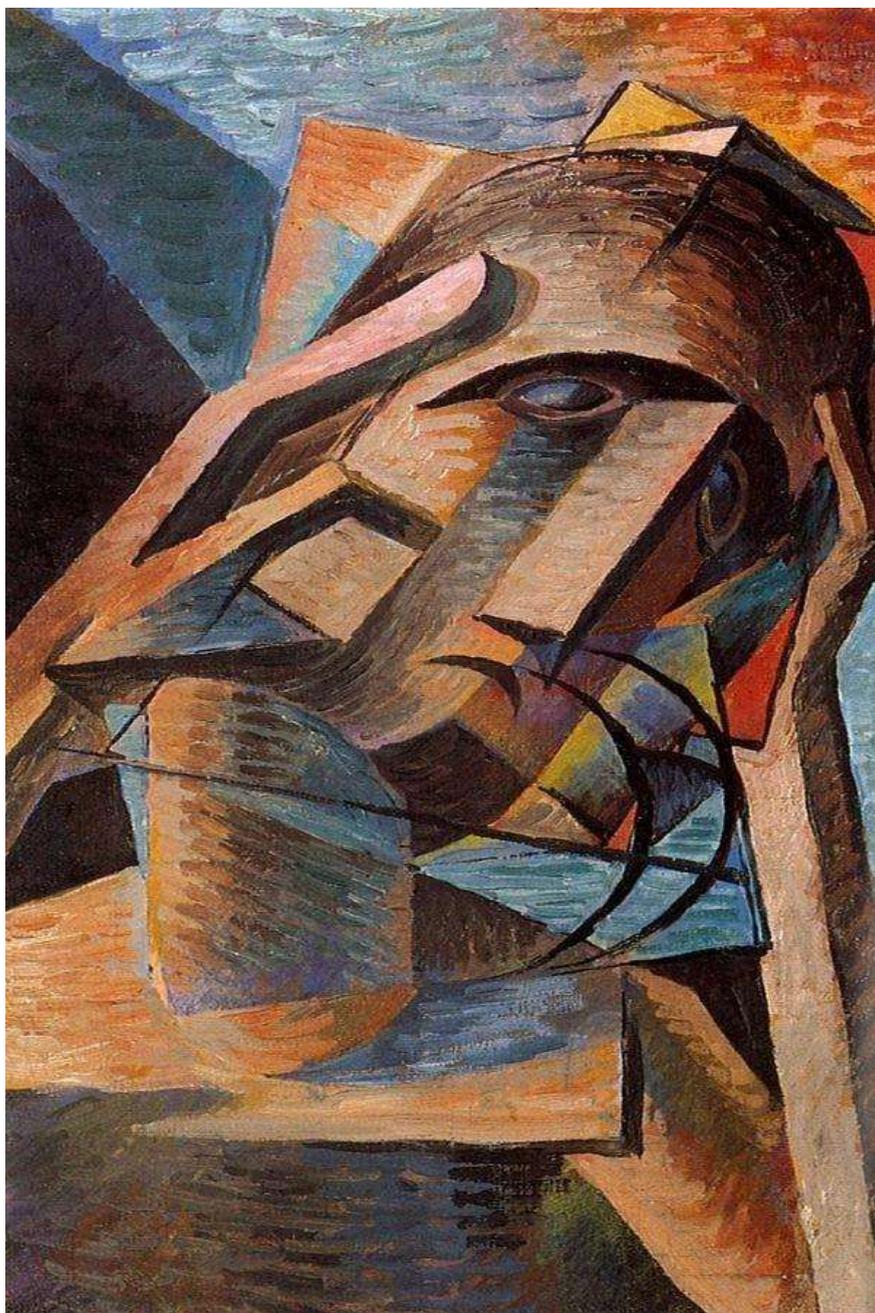


HERMES 2015

Author, Authorship, and Authority  
in the Age of Cultural Studies and New Media



14 – 18 June 2015  
Charles University, Prague



## HERMES 2015

### Author, Authorship, and Authority in the Age of Cultural Studies and New Media

In the past decades, the interest in the textuality, contexts, readership, historicity or materiality of literary production has overshadowed an important area of literary studies focused on the author, authorship and authority. The present time, marked by the predominance of cultural studies and profound changes effected by the new media, their interactive nature and their impact on our understanding of authenticity, originality and intellectual property, invites us to reconsider the status, meaning and potentialities of author-oriented approaches.

Starting from the Prague Structuralism discussions of authorship in terms of intentionality and "semantic gesture," Wayne Booth's "implied author," E. D. Hirsch's hermeneutics and Michel Foucault's concept of a historically developing, discursive "author-function," the author-oriented approaches can be discussed in view of a number of thematic areas and from various conceptual perspectives, for instance literariness, rhetoric and transformation of humanistic philological agenda, fiction and fictionality, gender studies, identity and psychoanalysis, autobiographical fiction, disease narratives and life writing, postcolonial and diasporic studies, authorship and intellectual property, constructivist approaches, collective authorship, new media studies, ethical turn, autobiographical studies, historical approaches, and literary sociology.

This summer school has been supported by the Programme for the Development of Research Areas at Charles University P09: Literature and Art in Intercultural Relations, subprogramme 'Transformations of the Cultural History of Anglophone Countries: Identities, Periods, Canons.'



# PROGRAMME

## **Sunday 14 June**

19:00 – 21:00 Welcome drinks, Room 201

## **Monday 15 June, Room 104**

9:00 – 9:15

Opening address - Jan Bičovský, Vice-Dean, Faculty of Arts

9:15 – 10:30 Keynote lecture I Chair: Martin Procházka (Prague)  
Liesbeth (E.J.) Korthals Altes (Groningen): Interpreting and Evaluating  
Controversial and Engagé Literature: the Role of the Authorial Ethos and  
Posture

10:30 – 11:00 Coffee Break

11:00 – 12:30 Session 1 Chair: Jean-Christophe Mayer (Montpellier)  
Niall Sreenan (UCL): 'In the name of the father': Darwin, Scientific Authority,  
and Literary Assimilation  
Josef Šebek (Prague): The Author as Agent in the Field:  
(Post-)Bourdiesian Approaches to the Author Today

Lunch 12:30 – 14:00

14:00 – 15:30 Session 2 Chair: Heta Pyrhönen (Helsinki)  
Johanna Fernández Castro (Giessen): Ethnography, Translation and  
Authorship  
Susana Justo Barreira (Santiago): Hunters of Stories (and Storytellers):  
The Author as Cultural Transducer between Oral and Written Worlds

15:30 – 16:00 Coffee Break

16:00 – 17:30 Session 3 Chair: Jens Kugele (Giessen)  
Meriel Benjamins (Groningen): Between Modernity and Outmodedness:  
Conceptions of Authorship of Dutch Psychological Realist Novelists  
Radek Hylmar (Prague): A Committed Author in the Modern Anarchist Lyric



## Tuesday 16 June, Room 104

9:00 – 10:30 Session 4 Chair: Ellen Sapega (Wisconsin)

Sonia Miceli (Lisbon): Autofiction as (Self-)Criticism: Some Suggestions from Contemporary Brazilian Literature

Gerardo Cruz-Grunerth (Santiago): Creation and Crisis of Latin American Self-fiction in César Aira and Mario Bellatin

10:30 – 11:00 Coffee Break

11:00 – 12:30 Session 5 Chair: Karen-Margrethe Simonsen (Aarhus)

Petra Poncarová (Prague): From the Construction of Authorship to the Construction of Cultural Identity: Ossian and the Czech Manuscripts of Dvůr Králové and Zelená Hora

Mathelinda Nabugodi (UCL): Dead Shelley: The Poet's Disfigured Body in the Margin of the Page

Lunch 12:30 – 14:00

14:00 – 15:30 Session 6 Chair: Florian Mussgnug (UCL)

Olga Pek (Prague): The "Not Not Poet": Vanessa Place's Conceptual Practice and the Author-Function

Jeanne Mathieu (Montpellier): Religious Conflict and the Return of the Author in Early Modern Dramatic Paratexts

15:30 Staff Business Meeting (Room 201)

## Wednesday 17 June, Room 104

9:15 – 10:30 Keynote Lecture II Chair: Martin Procházka (Prague)

Jean-Christophe Mayer (Montpellier): The Birth of Shakespearean Cultural Capital – Early Configurations and Appropriations of Shakespeare

10:30 – 11:00 Coffee Break

11:00 – 12:30 Session 7 Chair: Stephan Besser (Amsterdam)

Mélanie Yoeurp (Wisconsin): Shared Author Function in Arnon Goldfinger's *The Flat* (2011)

Laura Cernat (Leuven): The Scene of Invention: Interpreting the Portrayal of the Author at Work in J. M. Coetzee's *The Master of Petersburg*



Lunch 12:30 – 14:00

Afternoon Excursion:

St Agnes Monastery: exhibition *Mysterious Distances: Symbolism in Bohemian Lands 1880-1914*, followed by a trip to Strahov Monastery and the monastery brewery.

### **Thursday 18 June, Room 200**

9:00 – 10:30 Session 8                      Chair: Charlotte Pylyser (Leuven)

Leah Misemer (Wisconsin): Webcomics Authorship: The Economics of Building Internet Communities

Anne Myrup Munk (Aarhus): "I am someone, look at me." The Life and Literature of Today's Mediatized Author

10:30 – 11:00 Coffee Break

11:00 – 13:00 Session 9                      Chair: César Domínguez (Santiago)

Světlana Ondroušková (Prague): Author as a Visual and Theological Phenomenon

Kila van der Starre (Utrecht): Authorship in Poetry Audio Recordings

Gert-Jan Meyntjens (Leuven): Representations of Authorship in French Manuals for Creative Writing. A Cultural Studies Approach

Lunch 13:00 – 14:30

14:30 – 16:00 Session 10                      Chair: Susana Araujo (Lisbon)

Cecilia Therman (Helsinki): The Role of Intention in Interpretation: Theory Combined with Empirical Research on Reading

Laura Camino (Santiago): The Ovidian Heroides as a Model of Women's Writing and Its Influence on the Relationship of Male and Female Latin Poets of the Middle Ages

16:00 – 16:30 Coffee Break

16:30 – 17:30 Concluding Discussion

19:00 Farewell Dinner



## KEYNOTE LECTURE I

LIESBETH (E.J.) KORTHALS ALTES

University of Groningen

### **Interpreting and evaluating controversial and *engagé* literature: the role of the authorial ethos and posture**

Does it matter, for our interpretation of the work of Michel Houellebecq, Dave Eggers, or Christine Angot, whether we consider their author as authoritative, reliable, sincere, authentic, ironic, etc.? Haven't Barthes, Foucault and the likes helped eliminate "intentional fallacies"? Hasn't also narratology right ruled out the real author from any rigorous study of a work's narrative structures and meaning?

In this paper I will argue that in the case of literary (or any art) works that are perceived as *engagé*, ironic or as somehow 'tickling the doxa', readers/audiences will seek to grasp the *ethos* of the work's author or maker, in order to settle for a particular interpretive and evaluative framework. I also propose that the framing of an author's - and a narrator's or main character's - ethos, is intricately connected to our determination of an author's 'posture', and of the genre and tone of the text in question. From what I call a meta-hermeneutic perspective, I will use as a case Houellebecq's controversial but ideologically/ethically elusive work, authorial ethos and posture. I hope to propose a theoretical framework and heuristics for analysing some such intertwined framing activities involved in interpreting and evaluating this kind of writing. My framework builds on a number of complementary approaches, among which: narratology; rhetoric-pragmatics (Ruth Amossy and Dominique Maingueneau); institutional sociology (esp. the concept of posture, Bourdieu, Viala, Meizoz; and the idea of value regimes, Boltanski/Thévenot).

**Liesbeth Korthals Altes** is professor of Literary Theory and Modern French Literature (Department of Arts, Culture and Media, Groningen, Netherlands). Her research focuses on narrative, values and ethics; irony and the current 'return to sincerity'.

For her publications, see <http://www.rug.nl/staff/e.j.korthals.altes/index>. Her book on *Ethos and Narrative Interpretation - The Negotiation of Values in Fiction* has been published by Nebraska University Press in the Frontiers of Narrative Series in 2014. She is, among others, Director of the Center for Research on Culture of the Faculty of Arts, Groningen; Director of studies of the interdisciplinary Research Master *Literary and Cultural Studies*; Member of the board of the International Society for the Study of Narrative.



## KEYNOTE LECTURE II

JEAN-CHRISTOPHE MAYER

University of Montpellier III  
French National Centre for Scientific Research

### **The Birth of Shakespearean Cultural Capital – Early Configurations and Appropriations of Shakespeare**

In this talk, I first plan to look briefly at the current circulation and merchandising of Shakespeare's representations (particularly the Droeshout engraving) on the Internet and in mainstream culture. I will then show how such trends find their roots partly in the early configuration of his works in print (especially in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries) and in their appropriation by early readers. Some of the paratexts of Shakespeare's quartos and folios will be examined, as well as the traces and inscriptions left by readers in those books. I will argue that we need to focus on the interconnections between the configuration of his first editions and their reception by actual, or "empirical" readers to grasp how Shakespeare's image was shaped. His paradoxical position in modern culture as an author both revered and parodied can be explained when we examine the complex early modern constructions of him and his works.

**Jean-Christophe Mayer** is a Research Professor (*Directeur de Recherche*) employed by the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS). He is also a member of the Institute for Research on the Renaissance, the Neo-classical Age and the Enlightenment (IRCL) at Université Paul Valéry, Montpellier.

He is the author of *Shakespeare's Hybrid Faith—History, Religion and the Stage* (Palgrave, 2006) and *Shakespeare et la postmodernité: Essais sur l'Auteur, le Religieux, l'Histoire et le Lecteur* (Peter Lang, 2012). He has edited *Breaking the Silence on the Succession: A Sourcebook of Manuscripts and Rare Texts* (Montpellier UP, 2003) and has published an edition and translation of Henry Porter's *Two Angry Women of Abington* (Pléiade, Gallimard, 2010). He has also edited several collections of essays, including most recently *Representing France and the French in Early Modern English Drama* (U of Delaware Press, 2008) and *Shakespearean Configurations* (co-ed., EMLS special issue 12, 2013). He is co-general editor of the journal *Cahiers élisabéthains*.

In 2013 and 2014, he was on the teaching staff of the Erasmus programme "Staging European Identities: Memory, Conflict and Commerce in Early Modern European Culture", headed by Professor Martin Procházka.

He is currently completing a book to be entitled "Shakespeare's Early Readers: A Cultural History from 1590 to 1800" for Cambridge University Press.



## PARTICIPANTS

MERIEL BENJAMINS  
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University of Groningen

HERMES paper abstract: **Between Modernity and Outmodedness: Conceptions of Authorship of Dutch Psychological Realist Novelists.**

Literary history tends to portray the generation of authors that arose around 1900 – 20 years after the influential Tachtigers – as ‘Tachtiger epigones.’ Authors like Carel Schar ten, Herman Robbers and Carel Steven Adama van Scheltema were initially perceived by their contemporaries as a new generation. Nonetheless, their psychological realist novels and poems were soon regarded as old-fashioned and lacking innovation and originality. By hardly paying any attention to these authors, literary history tends to reproduce these pejorative historical value judgments. This paper aims to analyze the conceptions of authorship held by these authors and the way in which they contributed to processes of institutionalization and professionalization. Using recent theories concerning authorship, more specifically Meizoz’s theory of posture, it aims to investigate both the internal and the external posture of this generation of ‘epigones.’ Although they were indeed influenced by the poetical ideas of the Tachtigers, their conception of authorship diverged remarkably from their direct predecessors and had a decisive impact on the structure of the literary field.

Thesis abstract: **Cultural entrepreneurship in the Netherlands during the interwar period**

This thesis deals with cultural entrepreneurship in the Netherlands in the interwar era. During this period, due to the growth of the book market and the emergence of a new type of reader, many changes in the structure of the literary field occurred. Due to the altered relationships in the literary field, there was a strongly felt need for classification. This caused a cultural middle ground to come into being, a cultural sphere between high- and lowbrow cultural practices and products. Cultural entrepreneurs – e.g. editors, publishers and cultural association’s officers – contributed to the emergence of this middle ground both by promoting the work of authors that qualify as middlebrow and by making books that were considered to be high art available for the average reader. This project aims to analyze the ideas and ideals (both social, literary and economical) that drove cultural entrepreneurs in establishing and maintaining their practices.

Two key figures will serve as a starting point of a broader socio-cultural analysis of cultural entrepreneurship: Herman Robbers and Emanuel Querido. Both played an important role on the Dutch book market at the time and were influential because of the magazines, publishing houses, bookstores and/or cultural organizations they lead. The many capacities of Herman Robbers – he was both editor, publisher and a pivotal figure in different cultural organizations – and his affiliation to one of Holland’s biggest publishing houses make him an interesting figure. Querido, on the other hand, managed to turn his successful bookstore into an even more successful publishing house, high in both economic and symbolic value.

**Meriel Benjamins** (1985) studied Dutch Language and Culture (BA) and Literary and Cultural studies (MA) at Groningen University. She is currently works on a Ph.D. project concerning the role of cultural entrepreneurs during the interwar period at the same university. Her project is part of the NWO-project Dutch Middlebrow Literature 1930-1940, which maps out the upsurge of various forms of middlebrow literary culture. She has previously published on translation policies, reading groups and the works of Willem Brakman.



LAURA CAMINO  
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University of Santiago de Compostela

HERMES paper abstract:

**The Ovidian *Heroides* as a model of women's writing and its influence on the relationship of male and female Latin poets of the Middle Ages**

Ovid's *Heroides* were frequently analysed as a mere product of rhetoric's schools and were convicted by criticism for their alleged artificial and repetitive nature. Fortunately, since the eighties of last century, criticism made a refreshing change and *Heroides* began to be reassessed and studied from new points of view, beyond the analysis of the letters as simple *suasoriae*. Following closely the line opened in recent years by gender studies, the purpose of our paper is to consider what image of authorial self-definition we can find in women writers of Ovid's *Heroides*, how it relates to the literary strategies derived from the fictional agreement that the use of the epistolary genre entails, and how it could have influenced the development of a model of "writing woman" in the Middle Age.

Thesis abstract:

**Ovid's *Heroides* from the Classical Period to the Renaissance: new perspectives and contributions**

The intention of my thesis is to follow the evolution of epistolary fiction genre from classical period to the Renaissance. The starting point is Ovid's *Heroides*. Therefore, once we have settled the bases on which to understand the *Heroides* composition and its context of production and reception, we will intend to investigate how was the transmission process, under which social and cultural parameters were read, copied by the scribes, imitated and emulated, and to enquire into their influence on later Renaissance works, sometimes with similar intentioned results and sometimes opposed. As a consequence, our working hypothesis will test the continuity or not of the epistolary fiction genre created by Ovid with a historiographical and sociocultural study in order to reduce criticism deficiencies in the context of systematic and theoretical investigation of the epistolary genre, and more specifically, of Ovid collection.

**Laura Camino** graduated in Classics from the University of Santiago de Compostela in 2012. In 2013 she took a Master's degree in Research and Survival of Classical Texts at the University of Salamanca. Currently, Laura is a PhD student in Studies of Literature and Culture at the University of Santiago de Compostela with a scholarship from the Galician government to develop her research. Her research interests are Latin literature, esp. the figure of the poet Ovid, the reception of Latin literature, esp. in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, the literature in its sociopolitical context of production and reception and the role of women in both.



HERMES paper abstract:

**Ethnography, Translation, and Authorship: Oral narratives of Indigenous Cultures and the Concept of Collective Authorship**

Dealing with ethnographical texts from the perspective of translation and cultural studies enables an insight into a practical environment, where different translating processes and strategies are used, leading to the representation of “the Other.” The translation of indigenous oral myths, stories, rituals etc., implies their collection, transcription and translation by ethnologists during their fieldworks. In this paper, an historical case based on the field work and experiences of the German ethnologist Theodor Koch-Grünberg (1903-1905 in the border region between Brazil and Colombia) will show that the translating strategies used by the ethnologist-translator can be analyzed from the perspective of translation and cultural studies. The translation process is defined by contexts and conditions, which raise questions about authorship, a still problematic aspect in translation studies. Can we talk about an author in the case of translation of oral traditions, myths etc. by the study of indigenous cultures? How can we define authorship in the case of ethnological texts based on the study of these cultures?

I will question whether the analysis of translation processes can lead us to understand the role of informants, interpreters and ethnologists as authors of works, which in many cases became “sacral” (e.g. Popol Vuh) and are today considered as evidence of the past and history of the studied cultures.

Thesis abstract:

***Konstruktion des Anderen: Translationsprozesse in der Ethnologie und Das Bild südamerikanischer Indigenen im deutschsprachigen ethnologischen Diskurs***

(The Construction of the Other: Translation Processes in the Ethnology and the Image (Idea) of South American Indigenous People in the German Ethnological Discourse)

Translation in the ethnographical representation of foreign cultures is the main focus of my Research. The aim of my dissertation project is to analyse the representation of the Other not only in the ethnographical texts, but in different mediums like photography, music, film and performance. Translation is therefore understood not only as the pure transmission (*Übertragung*) from one language into another, but as the transformation from one medium into another. In this context different mediums and forms of expression complement each other through translation and make possible the representation of the Other. Based on a selection of representations from indigenous cultures, made by German-speaking anthropologists in the beginning of the 20th century, I would like to analyse how indigenous people and their cultures were constructed and portrayed (*dargestellt*) as the “Other.” With regard to these representations, it is vital to explore and explain how the voices and forms of expressions of the Other are translated. Therefore it is also significant for my work to discover the voices of all active players (indigenous people, informants, translators, etc.) through the voice of the anthropologist. This can be understood as an approach to discuss the anonymity of these players in translation processes as well as to analyse the consequences of this anonymity in ethnographical discourse.

**Johanna Fernández Castro** is a Colombian PhD student at the Giessen Center for the Study of Culture (GCSC) in Germany. She received her M.A. degree in Language, Culture and Translation from the Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz, Germany, in 2012. Her research focuses on the textual and visual representation of indigenous people in the Amazon rainforest in German ethnographic works from the beginning of the 20th century. Her academic interests fall mostly into the areas of translation and cultural studies, anthropology and history.



HERMES paper abstract: **The Scene of Invention: Interpreting the Portrayal of the Author at Work in J. M. Coetzee's *The Master of Petersburg***

Does literary representation of an author's life refashion the biographical narrative in order to make life itself intelligible via a familiar pattern of comprehension or in order to account for the specificities of that writer's work? When novelists and screenplay writers "make up" the story of a famous author, are they influenced only by the author's work and by the particular lifestory, or is there a broader cultural myth at work shaping the biographical imagination? A first step to answering these questions is to look at those precise moments in biographical fiction when the author is imagined in the act of writing or of meditating on what s/he wants to write. These episodes are interesting because they challenge the familiar distinction between the concrete author and the abstract author, staging a point of conjunction between the background voice of a literary work (*inscripteur*, in Meizoz and Maingueneau's terms), the public persona of the writer (*écrivain*), and the protagonist of his/her personal life (*personne*).

Coetzee's achievement in the final chapter of *The Master of Petersburg* is to imagine Dostoevsky at the writing desk *while preserving the opacity* of the creative phenomenon – to imagine the novelist writing not as himself, not as the abstract voice of literary theory, not as a divine but neither a human mind. Though all the standard elements of a writer-at-work scene are present (initial sterility, glimpse of a subject, impeccable flow of words), the particular moment described in Coetzee's novel challenges the inspiration myth by denying the notion of authorial satisfaction or redemption through writing and by presenting writing as a question, not an answer to the problems of everyday life, and, finally, by including apocryphal, modified fragments from Dostoevsky. At the end of a fascinating journey through a writer's mind, the writing episode itself comes to signal the whole plot as fictive, that there is no way of getting into a writer's mind, because the scene of invention, like the scene of a crime, is surrounded by an unbreakable silence.

**Thesis abstract:** Postmodern Framings of Literary Lives. Images of Writers in Biographical Fictions

My research deals with the reconfiguration of the images of canonical writers from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in recent biographical novels (from Barnes's *Flaubert's Parrot* and Cunningham's *The Hours* to Tóibín's *The Master*). Exploring questions like auctorial posture and its impact on a writer's posthumous portrayal, stylistic and ideological affinities between a writer's fiction and the fiction depicting his/her life in posterity, or intertextuality and the use of past documents (fiction as well as correspondence and diaries) in contemporary fiction, I engage with the question of revisiting literary tradition. The main aspect I aim to elucidate is the framing – the selection that each novelist-biographer operates within the mass of biographical material about an author. My hypothesis is that this framing, and along with it the structure and sometimes even the stylistic particularities of a biographical novel, are strongly influenced by the style, structure or artistic credo of the subject-author's literary and theoretical work. The authors in whose representations in recent fiction I am most interested are those who challenged the tradition of biography, contested or parodied its methods (Flaubert, Proust, Woolf, Nabokov).

**Laura Cernat** is a first-year PhD student at KU Leuven and at the University of Bucharest, working on the representations of writers from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century in recent and contemporary biographical novels. Holding an MA in Literary Theory and Comparative Literature and an MA in Western Literature, she is currently interested in questions like: analysing authorial posturing, revisiting and reinterpreting past cultural icons, the hybridity between biography and literature, the history of the biographical genre, theories of biography, and counterfactual life writing. Her research focuses on the fictionalized lives of writers including Virginia Woolf, Proust, Flaubert, Nabokov, Dostoevsky, and Henry James.



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HERMES paper abstract: **Creation and Crisis of Latin American Self-fiction in César Aira and Mario Bellatín**

In his book *Est-il je?* Philippe Gasparini considers the possibility of investigating autofictional texts which plant instability within themselves. Here, these signs will be followed, considering that these phenomena are put into crisis by the limitations and implications of a complex category. The aim of the communication is to observe two of the most complex cases of contemporary Latin American self-fiction: the Argentinean César Aira and the Mexican Mario Bellatín. Therefore, will be addressed the works *Cómo me hice monja* (1993) by Aira and *El Gran Vidrio. Tres autobiografías* (2007) by Bellatín; which are not only relevant because they establish a link between the author and narrator through the proper name, but also because it is still possible to understand these as works of self-fiction despite the lack or difference therein. Moreover, both writers, in different terms and scopes, maintain their own separate artistic projects that exceed the literary field, in order to create a corpus, a figure, a person, which is formed or performed as much through the textual medium as through the lectures and performances he gives through his public presentations.

Thesis abstract:

**Poetics and Politics of Aporia in Contemporary Hispanic Literature and Culture**

My research focuses on aporia as a poetics of literary and cultural discourse. Aporia, as Jacques Derrida states, is not a logical impossibility, but a path to transcend dichotomies. Thus, this work shall observe the cultural and social implications posed by artistic aesthetics that involve the body, space and identity. The major implication of this poetics is the creation of a logic that turns the idea of the human into something different, away from the limitations imposed by the logical oppositions that displace and marginalize a part of humans. To this end, this research takes a philosophical point of view as starting point, following Derridean categories such as *difference* and dissemination; Bataille's proposal of a heterology; A. Badiou's theory of the subject; and R. Braidotti's perspective on posthumanism. Furthermore, these are intended to articulate a viewpoint on poetics that entail the metafictional, the autofiction, the liminal, the (im)possible world, and the disarticulation of text and body. The corpus inform a corpus mainly of contemporary Hispanic literature, which implies short story, short novel and hyper-short novel of Mario Bellatín, Diamela Eltit, Naïef Yehya, Patricia Laurent and Pepe Rojo; this literary corpus will be linked to contemporary film and visual arts.

**Gerardo Cruz-Grunerth** studied literary theory and Hispanic literature at the University of Guadalajara, Mexico, where he wrote his thesis *Mundos (casi) imposibles. La metalepsis en los mundos posibles de la narrativa mexicana postmoderna* (Almost Impossible Worlds. Metalepsis in Mexican Postmodern Literature). Some of his academic papers have been published in Mexico, United States and Spain. He is currently the recipient of an Erasmus Mundus fellowship to pursue further graduate studies in the program Crossways in Cultural Narratives. As a fiction writer, his recent books include *El fuego camina conmigo* (Fire walk with me, 2014), the novels *Tela de araña* (Spiderweb, 2011) and *Últimas horas* (The Last Hours, 2009).



HERMES paper abstract: **A Committed Author in the Modern Anarchist Lyric**

The aim of the paper is to present Czech anarchist poetry before the First World War and to determine the author's socialist and anarchist conviction expressed in lyric poetry and describe the reflections of the anarchist author's values, beliefs and opinions.

The analysed texts are the poems and essays of Stanislav K. Neumann (1875-1947); one of the leaders of the movement, who published an important anarchist magazine around the turn of the century. In addition to his literary activities, Neumann attempted to define the ethical and social principles of anarchism.

The paper discusses Neumann's literary and theoretical writings between 1895 and 1905 in the context of the Berlin anarchist circle. German theorists and poets were important for Prague anarchists. A short comparison with Erich Mühsam's (1878-1934) and Richard Dehmel's (1863-1920) works helps to show common features of anarchist lyrical poetry in the Czech-German region.

In Neumann's poetry, the author's anarchist involvement consists in two aspects: the search for individual originality (the lyrical subject's delimitation and the effusively experienced individualism) leads to the idea of a new society established by the new individuals and is therefore closely related to the tendency of collectivism and egalitarianism. The other aspect shows that the connection of poetry and life is a poetic programme; poets should search for life in the most genuine form, they should struggle for the expression of the most ordinary and common features of life.

Thesis abstract: **Czech Anarchism in Literature before the First World War**

My thesis is concerned with an anarchist conception of society and the role of the individual in the society at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The research focuses especially on the subjects associated with women's rights and women's emancipation (concept of marriage and family, conditions of motherhood, gender roles etc.) and concentrates on the problem as to the ways in which the visions of and opinions on the social question solution are presented in the anarchist poems and novels.

The thesis compares the Czech texts with the German anarchist expressions during the period 1890–1914. The aim of the comparison is not only to find the similarities and differences, but also to analyze whether the German anarchists and their work influenced the Czech movement and its literature.

One of the main intentions is to demonstrate that the manner of an author's anarchist conviction expressed in literature could be studied through the various corporeal representations because literary depiction of physicality allows to emphasize both gender and working-class problems.

**Radek Hylmar** is a PhD student at the Department of Czech and Comparative Literature at Charles University in Prague. His thesis is concerned with anarchism in Czech literature at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It attempts to determine the position of poetry and prose within other expressions of anarchism, especially social and gender tendencies, and to contemplate Czech anarchism before the First World War as an integrated cultural and social phenomenon.



SUSANA JUSTO BARREIRA  
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HERMES paper abstract: **Hunters of Stories (and Storytellers): The Author as Cultural Transducer between Oral and Written Worlds**

The “myth of the solitary genius” has been one of the major ideas to shape our way of understanding and interpreting literature in the last two centuries. Since the Romantic era, the author has been seen, in Mark Rose’s words, “as the originator and ownership, and therefore the owner of a special kind of commodity, the work.” Hence a figure whose function or status it is not only literary, but also economic and legal. Terms such as authorship, writing and copyright are closely related to the author and the literary text. Nowadays the author’s figure and authorship is seen as a social, historical and cultural construct. This is facilitated by the likes of Barthes or Foucault, whose reflections on the ontology of literature, specifically its metaphorical proclamation of the author’s death, seem to prefigure in some sense the media conceptual revolution, and the progressive rise of a new kind of authorship: a re-oralized, collective and collaborative one.

This paper aims to challenge the conventional forms of author and authorship through the Prague School’s semiotic theory of literary transduction and the analysis of the Paul Bowles’ poet figure and its “collaborative translations” with illiterate Moroccan storytellers: Mohammed Mrabet, Driss Ben Hamed Charhadi (Larbi Layachi), Abdeslam Boulaich and Ahmed Yacoubi. Through Bowles’ case, I intend to explore the possibilities of author and authorship notions in relation to literary transduction and oral literature, and to raise questions about multiple authorship, paying attention to its effects not only on the (western) conception of authorship, but also on the ontology of verbal art itself.

Thesis abstract: **Orature and Comparative Literature: Methodological and Analytical Reflections**

Starting from a critique of European graphocentrism (specially the traditional characterisation of orature as an archaic or primitive phase of literary development), this thesis explores the possibilities of overcoming the methodological limitations of oral literature study in the field of (European) Comparative Literature. One of the main restrictions analysed is the fossilization of oral literature through its assimilation to written support and its introduction into the literary canon—something that is directly reflected in the methods used in literary studies for analysing the oral phenomenon. In this regard, its main objectives can be reduced to three: 1) to overcome the conception of orature as a primitive phase of literary development under an evolutionist perspective (consider, for example, the vitality of orature in the modern and contemporary eras), which in good measure involves questioning the traditional Eurocentric and graphocentric approach to orature; 2) to surmount the analytical level of ethnographic and folklore studies focusing on orality, which is specified in the privilege of minimum units (known as oral ‘formulas’) and in mapping the migration of these units from the East towards the West; 3) to include the analysis of orature within the framework of comparative literature, since if this discipline has its object of study at the border, oral manifestations are precisely characterized by crossing temporal, spatial, linguistic and cultural boundaries.

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HERMES paper abstract: **“Which thinge our Author marking well, (...) And as he mused in his minde, immediatly arose, An History of late yeares don, which might as he suppose, Styrr up their myndes to godlynes”**: Religious conflict and the return of the author in Early Modern dramatic paratexts.

In 1968, Barthes declared the author dead. One year later, Foucault expounded his concept of the “author-function.” According to him, the author, or the writer, did not exist as such before the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This paper will focus on that concept of authorship by looking at early modern dramatic paratexts. We will follow Gerard Genette’s definition of the term “paratext.” Thus we will take into account “those liminal devices and conventions, both within the book (peritext) and outside it (epitext), that mediate the book to the reader: titles and subtitles, pseudonyms, forewords, dedications, epigraphs, prefaces, intertitles, notes, epilogues, and afterwords.” We will explore the ways in which the figure of the author may resurface when religious issues are dealt with. To what extent can Barthes’ and Foucault’s theories of authorship be applied to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century dramatic paratextual material? Do these texts enable us to go beyond the doctrine of the death of the author? Playwrights such as Barnabe Barnes, Thomas Dekker, Christopher Marlowe, Thomas Middleton, Samuel Rowley, William Shakespeare or Nathaniel Woodes all wrote prologues or epilogues to some of their plays. These texts are significant because they bring the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century religious conflicts to the fore but also because they are liminal texts in which traces of the author can be found. By analyzing the ways in which the playwrights’ religious commitment may appear in Renaissance paratexts, the aim of our work will be to “rearticulate the text with its author.”

Thesis abstract: **The Art of Religious Dispute in Early Modern Drama: 1580-1625**

The primary aim of this work is to determine the extent to which Renaissance dramatists appropriated and transformed the old tradition of the medieval *disputatio* in order to stage the religious dissensions of their time. Indeed, the early modern period is a period which is characterised by the notions of religious hybridity and conflict. What immediately comes to mind is the conflict between Catholics and Protestants following the 1534 Henrician Reformation in England. Nevertheless, the conflicts between Protestants and Jews, Protestants and Muslims or the intra-Protestant conflict are also of prime concern. To what extent can the encounter of these different faiths, as shown in Renaissance drama, be analysed in terms of dispute? Two definitions of the word ‘dispute’ will be taken into account. Indeed, it can be defined both as a formal dialectical debate and as a violent disagreement between two or more people. In other words, the term ‘dispute’ can be understood as a disputation or as a quarrel. This thesis centres around several fundamental questions: Which tools are used by the dramatists to stage religious antagonism? To what extent was the idea of a dichotomy between Catholics and Protestants built thanks to scenes of dispute? Can this conflict be solved on stage? The corpus includes plays by Barnabe Barnes, Thomas Dekker, Thomas Heywood, Christopher Marlowe, Philip Massinger, Thomas Middleton and William Shakespeare.

**Jeanne Mathieu** is a PhD student at Université Paul-Valéry, Montpellier III in France. She currently teaches English at the Université Toulouse-Jean Jaurès. Her doctoral thesis is supervised by Professors Nathalie Vienne-Guerrin (IRCL/Montpellier) and Jean-Christophe Mayer (ircl/cnrs). It focuses on the representation of religious conflicts in early modern English drama and is entitled *The Art of Religious Dispute in Early Modern Drama: 1580-1625*. Her corpus includes plays by Barnabe Barnes, Thomas Dekker, Thomas Heywood, Thomas Middleton and William Shakespeare. She has recently published an article on *The Massacre at Paris* entitled ‘Our quarrel is no more / But to defend their strange inventions’ (IV.ii.7-8): The Art of Religious Dispute in Christopher Marlowe’s *The Massacre at Paris*.



HERMES paper abstract: **Representations of authorship in French manuals for creative writing. A cultural studies approach.**

This paper explores the representations of authorship in contemporary, mainly French handbooks for creative writing. Which type of authors and what kinds of writing practices do these commercially successful texts construct? Are these conceptions coherent or are there contradictions? How do they interrelate? Which role do these didactic books attribute to the new media in their conceptions of authorship, especially to online writing communities, blogs and online publishing? How do they conceive the literary field and the author's role in it?

Raymond Williams, one of the major influences in early cultural studies, famously asserted that "culture is ordinary, in every society and in every mind." According to Williams culture should be thought of as a whole way of life, both in a societal and an individual sense, both traditional or common and innovative or creative. I want to take this way of approaching cultural studies to investigate a literary phenomenon so ordinary in appearance that it is often overlooked, namely the handbook for creative writing. Creative writing handbooks can be linked to the idea of culture as ordinary in multiple ways. Firstly, they bring into focus an agent in the literary field which until now, despite his growing presence, has largely been neglected, namely the amateur writer. Secondly, they constitute a genre that, although influential in the literary field, cannot be classified as strictly literary. Thirdly, these handbooks display a continuous effort to deconstruct the idea of the author-genius and to bring him back to the level of the common and hardworking craftsman or woman. Fourthly, a considerable part of the creative writing scene is on the internet, the space of contemporary public and everyday life par excellence.

Finally, they can be related to both the individual and societal meaning of culture that Williams identified. In my paper, I will first focus on French handbooks and their conceptions of authorship and the literary field and then I will attempt to relate these representations to a broader French context. In this way, I will shed light on a genre that is very much part of (literary) culture as a whole, but that has not yet been sufficiently examined by literary studies.

Thesis abstract: **Paperback Writer. A Study of the Normative Poetics in French Handbooks for Creative Writing**

This thesis focuses primarily on storytelling as a craft, a learning activity based on strategic insight and the adequate use of a toolbox, as opposed to the idea of literature as art, based on the mystery of original and free creation. How do such handbooks 'define,' 'construct' and legitimate a writing practice? Which strong constraints and norms are defined and, conversely, which options remain open? How do various images of the writing practice, of author and reader in the handbooks interrelate and contradict each other? Most handbooks also pay attention to preparing a final manuscript, presenting it to a publisher and achieving (commercial) success. The discursive analysis of the normative poetics of handbooks is hence complemented by an analysis of the institutional forces and authorial 'postures' that determine the specific culture (both in the broad and in the restricted sense of literary culture) in which they circulate.

**Gert-Jan Meyntjens** holds BAs of Linguistics and Literature (French-Italian-English) and Philosophy and an MA in Literature of the Modernity from the Universiteit Antwerpen. His Master's thesis dealt with the idea of the end of the novel in the works of Roland Barthes and Milan Kundera. As a researcher affiliated to the Cultural Studies program at KU Leuven, he is currently preparing a PhD on the normative poetics of French and American handbooks for creative writing in the 21st century, under the supervision of Prof. dr. Anneleen Masschelein.



HERMES paper abstract: **Autofiction as (Self-)Criticism: Some Suggestions from Contemporary Brazilian Literature**

In the last decade, Brazilian writers, critics and scholars have been widely concerned with autofiction, which has been the subject of articles, books and doctoral theses. This concern has been, on the one hand, the inevitable response to the growing publication of autobiographically based texts and, on the other hand, it has stimulated the reaction of writers who, taking advantage of the interest of readers and critics, have written professedly autofictional texts with the aim, in some cases, to criticize the concept itself and the idea of literature associated with it, including the obsession with the issue of limits or, seen from the opposite perspective, the lack of boundaries between reality and fiction, which would constitute the essential principle of autofiction.

The starting point for my discussion will be Ricardo Lísias' serials *Deputy Tobias* (2014), in which a writer called Ricardo Lísias is murdered by another character also named Ricardo Lísias. Since the death of the author is perpetrated by his own double, the investigation involves critics and scholars. More interestingly, it becomes clear that the concept of autofiction is even more meaningful in the age of social networks, which allow writers to be massively present in public life – the readers participated in the construction of the plot, which had a following on Facebook.

In the light of this and other works, I suggest that autofiction can be understood as a fictional experiment, which does not necessarily promote the death of the work in support of the author's narcissistic resurrection, but an unfolding of both, since it produces a *mise en scène* of the relationships between authorship, signature, work, critics and readership. More than a performance of the self, autofiction is a performance of writing and, for this reason, it is often very close to the essay, being at once critical and self-critical.

Thesis abstract:

**Book, travel and narration in Ruy Duarte de Carvalho and Bernardo Carvalho**

Taking as a starting point the analysis of two novels by Angolan writer Ruy Duarte de Carvalho (*Os Papéis do Inglês / The Englishman's papers*, 2000) and Brazilian writer Bernardo Carvalho (*Nove Noites / Nine nights*, 2002), I investigate the relationships between anthropology and literature. Secondly, I look into the representation of space and landscape in these and other novels by both writers, and I explore the relationship between these representations and a specific idea of book which take shape in these works. Thirdly, I consider visual writing, in particular in Ruy Duarte de Carvalho's works, and try to understand how words and images (be they mental, cinematic or photographic) are related to each other in the representation of space. Finally, I tackle the connections between these main topics - ethnographical experience, anthropological knowledge and the representation of space and landscape - and the literary projects of both authors for literature and, specifically, their contribution to Angolan and Brazilian literature.

**Sonia Miceli** (MA, Univ. of Lisbon, 2011) holds a Degree in Modern Languages and Literatures (Spanish, Portuguese and English) from the University of Calabria (Italy) and a Master's Degree in Comparative Studies from the University of Lisbon, where she is currently a PhD student in the same programme. Her current research interests are mainly contemporary Brazilian literature, interart studies (cinema and literature), poetics and theories of landscape, and the relationships between literature and ethnography. In her PhD project, she investigates these topics in selected novels by Ruy Duarte de Carvalho (Angola) and Bernardo Carvalho (Brazil).



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HERMES paper abstract: **Webcomics Authorship: The Economics of Building Internet Communities**

When do reading practices, such as note taking, commenting, responding, writing fan fiction, etc., become acts of authorship, particularly on the Internet? As media studies scholars such as Henry Jenkins and George Landow have noted, reading on the Internet is participatory, with readers writing comments on websites or posting fan fiction on the media they consume. This collapse between producer and consumer is possible because of what Richard Lanham refers to as the “economy of attention,” where authors compete for corporate sponsorship based on number of views, rather than for direct monetary contributions from consumers.

Webcomics emerge as interesting spaces to observe changing notions of authorship on the web. Responding to an often problematic disconnect between authorship and labor in commercial comics, webcomics authors promote one another through guest comics, as well as through linking and comment mentions, fostering communities of authors visible in the web space. The practice of posting guest comics, strips drawn by other webcomics artists, in the same space as the main webcomic highlights reading as an act of authorship, because guest comics present parodic readings of the main comic. Examining the practice of guest comics on the website for the long-running webcomic *Questionable Content* will allow me to explore how authorship can work when influenced by the economic structures of the web space. Because authorship is destabilized in the space of the web and in the space of a comic, this examination allows us to see how readers and authors are not as distant as we usually assume.

Thesis abstract: **The Great Crossover: Readers and Authors in Serial Comics (1960-2011)**

My dissertation reorients scholarship about authors and readers by examining how their interaction shapes texts, combining usually separate discussions of the two forces. I argue, drawing from fan studies, that “popular” rather than “high” culture texts encourage reader participation, and demonstrate that comics are unique in situating reader input as integral to the text because of their multimodal serial print format. My chapters focus on “contact points,” which provide textual evidence of reader/author interaction, tracing increased transparency in the role of the author and situating the reader as either a close or distant partner in shaping the text. The destabilized collaborative authorship of commercial comics in the 1960s encouraged reader participation, while the fairer labor practices of the underground, created communities of *Wimmen’s Comix* readers who became authors themselves. The evolved collaborative authorship of commercial comics in the 80s and 90s courted a different kind of reader, while the distinction between author and reader collapsed in the space of webcomics. I focus on comics in 20<sup>th</sup> century America in my analysis, but hope to emphasize the ways that all popular culture texts show interactions between authors and readers.

**Leah Misemer** is a PhD candidate in English Literature at University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her dissertation, from which this presentation is drawn, explores how comics, as popular culture ephemera, show connections between readers and authors that are difficult to see in other media. In addition to serving as an organizer of the A.W. Mellon Workshop on Comics since 2013, she has published in *Forum for World Literature Studies* and has a forthcoming article in the special issue of *Composition Studies* on comics and multimodal composition.



HERMES paper abstract:

**“I am someone, Look at me”. The Life and Literature of Today’s Mediatized Author**

Since the nineteenth century authors have been celebrated as extraordinary and charismatic subjects that reflect and refine man’s mind. But until very recently the concept of the author has been considered highly problematic from a theoretical point of view. As Sean Burkes argues in *The Death and Return of the Author* (2008), putting our interest in the author aside was a key consideration in the Russian formalists’ methodology and was later turned into a political necessity by Barthes and Foucault. With deconstructionist theory this consideration became an ontological truth.

With the past decades’ boom in biographical storytelling in literature, in reality shows on TV and in the everyday self-fashioning in social media it is needless to say that the author and the subject are back in the limelight. But some decisive questions remain: What kind of author has in fact returned? What does it mean for the social role of literature and the status of authors that their public images are permeated with media of all kinds? And how does their literary deployment of today’s obsession with identity develop the theme?

In my presentation I will discuss these questions through an investigation of the dynamic interplay between author, literature, media and identity in the Norwegian phenomenon *My Struggle* - autobiographical novelist Karl Ove Knausgård’s highly revelatory book-series that made him a star well beyond Scandinavia, in the Anglophone literary world. I will particularly focus on Knausgård’s recent New York Times-essay “I am someone, Look at me” (2014) in which he claims, that a paradox of our time is “that the desire to be seen is so closely linked to the joy of self-concealment.” The theoretical framework for this presentation consists of Linda Haverty Rugg’s *Picturing Ourselves* (1997), Arnaud Smith’s “Making the case for self-narration against autofiction” (2011), Kenneth Gergen’s *The Saturated Self* (1992) and Jonathan Goldman’s *Modernism Is the Literature of Celebrity* (2011).

**Thesis abstract: The Construction of Literary Meaning across Media – an investigation of contemporary autobiographical authors’ self-fashioning**

In my project I focus on authors, who are considered highly literary; they write acclaimed experimental autobiographical novels, long critical essays and primarily use the book as their medium. When it comes to this kind of – one could say highbrow – authors other media are often considered irrelevant, inferior or even in direct opposition to the understanding and construction of the literary meaning of their works. However, the media condition that sets the terms for the authors and for the production and reception of literature today is the convergence culture; a media culture in which new digital and interactive media co-exist with older, more established media and where content spills over from one medium to the other. I investigate what this transmedial perspective means for the current dynamic interplay between literature, media, identity and the author figure. In the particular case of autobiographical works of fiction reader attention naturally centres on the photographic image of the author (especially as it appears on the book) and whether intended or not the image often plays a key role in the construction of the author as a public figure and eventually in the construction of his or her oeuvre. Thus I seek to develop analytical strategies with a high degree of media awareness that can grasp both textual and for instance visual literary meaning.

**Anne Myrup Munk** (b.1984) is PhD student at the Department of Aesthetics and Communication, Faculty of Arts, Aarhus University. She has published peer reviewed articles on literary self-fashioning, star authors and the materiality of the book in the journals *K&K*, *Scandinavika* and the anthology *Millennium*.



HERMES paper abstract: **Dead Shelley: The Poet's Disfigured Body in the Margin of the Page**

'I once imagined, that in everything any man ever wrote, spoke, acted, or imagined, is contained, as it were, an allegorical idea of his own future life, as the acorn contains the oak,' the English poet Percy Bysshe Shelley once wrote. Many of his own comments uncannily anticipate his accidental death in 1822. His disfigured body was washed up on shore a few days later, only identifiable by a volume of Keats's poems in his pocket. Trelawny's account of the cremation began the work of turning this accident into the romantic persona of the author Shelley. This image is perfected in Fourier's painting 'The Burial of Shelley' (1886) and Edward Onslow Ford's 1893 sculpture of Shelley's washed-up corpse now forming the Shelley Memorial at Oxford. The tragic romance of Shelley's death is enhanced by the fact that when he died, he was working on a poem entitled *The Triumph of Life*. I would like to take the poem's reception as a case study in order to explore the relation between the authorial persona and critical reading, taking my bearings from de Man's seminal essay 'Shelley Disfigured.' This essay is not only important for reviving interest in Shelley's work in the late 1970s and 1980s, its conceptualisation of 'disfiguration' is also central to de Man's oeuvre and to the subsequent development of deconstructive literary theory. Disfiguration is the incessant unravelling of figurative language performed by the positing power of linguistic figuration, but it is also 'the actual death and subsequent disfigurement of Shelley's body.' At odds with his reputation for ahistorical formalism, de Man squarely places Shelley's 'defaced body ... in the margin of the last manuscript page' where, he adds, it 'has become an inseparable part of the poem.' Starting from de Man's assertion that Shelley's corpse is inseparable from his poem, I examine how a number of late 20<sup>th</sup> century critics have disposed of Shelley's dead body in reading his *Triumph of Life*.

Thesis abstract: **Digressions: A Comparative Study of Percy Bysshe Shelley and Walter Benjamin**

Shelley is an English romantic poet whose life ended in a shipwreck off the Italian coast. Initially condemned for being an 'ineffectual angel' (Arnold), Shelley was later lauded for being, alternatively, a proto-Marxist and a proto-deconstructionist. Today he holds a secure place in the canon. Benjamin is born almost exactly a hundred years after Shelley, a critical thinker and evocative writer who ended his own life on the Spanish border in 1940. Like Shelley's, Benjamin's death has become a myth, and like Shelley his reception has bifurcated into two strands often seemingly incompatible and explicitly at odds with one another: Benjamin the Jewish mystic or Benjamin the Marxist materialist. This thesis mediates between the two different aspects of their works in order to explore how the political and the figural are intertwined for both Shelley and Benjamin. It neither seeks to show a Shelleyan influence on Benjamin, nor undertake a Benjaminian reading of Shelley. Instead it explores intellectual affinities between the two writers, taking its bearings from that moment in twentieth century literary theory where their afterlives intersect - in the work of a number of critics associated with deconstruction (Carol Jacobs, Paul de Man, Jacques Derrida). Themes that are important to both writers include the concept of afterlife as the truer life of literary writing, the power and decay of language, the relation between history and aesthetics, and the possibility of a genuine break with the oppressive past. The methodology is inspired by Shelley's description of metaphors as 'pictures of integral thoughts' and Benjamin's formulation of the 'dialectical image' as 'the caesura in the movement of thought.' Just like a caesura interrupts the flow of a poetic line, so each section of the thesis presents a picture in which Shelley's thought is interrupted by, and in its turn interrupts, Benjamin's thought.

**Mathelinda Nabugodi** is currently pursuing a PhD in Comparative Literature at University College London. She is also interested in the afterlife of Romanticism, the aesthetics of poetry, and the relation between history and its narration.



HERMES paper abstract: **Author as a Visual and Theological Phenomenon**

The following contribution intends to present the author and authorship as phenomena closely linked to theological thought and visual culture. The main objective is to problematize the concept of the author as an abstract entity (or the reader as its counterpart).

In the introduction, the importance of the visual turn in connection to mediality and how we understand the world will be discussed. The question of “Who speaks” prevailing in the oral domain thus has gradually become overshadowed by the one of “Who creates” typical of the visual sphere providing room for an entity called the creator or the *author*.

The paper will mainly focus on the theory of the “spiritual” (*das Geistige*) developed by Vassily Kandinsky in his *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* (1911). In particular, concepts related to visuality and abstraction will be foregrounded, e.g. synaesthesia as a method (not as a rhetorical figure), visual rhythm, inner necessity, or the spiritual. Yet the spiritual is not to be confused with personality, which is in the period most commonly understood as an entity with fully developed psychological traits communicating the author’s feelings or opinions. Kandinsky’s conception of the artist is structural and derived from the immanent nature of art; however, it also employs the synaesthetic sensual perception which makes his theory unique and interesting even for the contemporary perspective, as it surmounts the subject/object dichotomy.

In the conclusion, the theoretical concepts of Kandinsky will be compared and contrasted with the concept of the author in literary theory (narratology). The importance of visuality in literature will be examined and a question of how it influences our author/reader experience will be addressed.

Thesis abstract: **“Jump into My A.s.” Cruelty and Eroticism as Rhythmic Textual Units**

The dissertation thesis *“Jump into My A.s.” Cruelty and Eroticism as Rhythmic Textual Units* concerns the development in visual arts and literature in the avant-garde, especially in late Symbolism or Expressionism. The theoretical concept of rhythm is rooted in the thinking of the art historians Alois Riegl and Wilhelm Worringer who dealt with the rhythm as a corporeal or haptic phenomenon resulting in the production of an abstract geometrical ornament. Rhythm is thus considered as a synaesthetic principle of organization with the power to mediate our sensual perceptions and emotions. The concept of rhythm is also related to artistic expression and was further developed by the visual artists Vassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee and other Bauhaus members. It spread from painting to other domains such as film, architecture or modern dance. The objective is to examine literary texts of the period that have the potential of strong visual expression (e.g. Alfred Kubin, Ladislav Klíma) with the focus on scenes of cruelty and eroticism, and the ways in which they absorbed the (syn)aesthetics of the period.

**Světlana Ondroušková** is a Comparative Literature postgraduate at the Institute of Czech and Comparative Literature of Charles University Prague. Her diploma thesis *“Jump into My A.s.” Cruelty and Eroticism as Rhythmic Textual Units* deals with the early avant-garde experiments with visuality in the art and literature. It covers such topics as visual rhythm, medial synaesthesia or synaesthesia as an artful process, and mediality.



HERMES paper abstract: **The “Not Not Poet”:  
Vanessa Place’s Conceptual Practice and the Author-Function**

In 1969, Foucault observed: “If we wish to know the writer in our day, it will be through the singularity of his absence and in his link to death, which has transformed him into a victim of his own writing.” An important example of a similar-minded contemporary investigation into the author-function is conceptual poetry, a body of (not only) US writing with emphasis on appropriative techniques. It aims to engage with legal and institutional systems regulating the circulation of literature and subvert its (logocentric) assumptions such as originality, inspiration, authenticity, authority etc.

Accordingly, the author-work relationship is often articulated in terms of a victim/murderer dialectics. For instance Vanessa Place (\*1972), an appellate attorney whose poetic project critiques the complicity of the lyric subject, claims to have “killed poetry.” Yet she also employs poetic strategies in her lectures and tweets epigrammatic sentences from her talks and has them reprinted as poetry. Her work simulates non-intervention, yet the material is chosen for maximum effect and carefully arranged. All this presents a complex performative and rhetorical exploitation of the role of the author and her capacities as a scholar, copyright holder, performer and consumer. According to Place, conceptual work ends up “insufficiently capable of exchange value” without the safeguard of “authorial presence,” which in her case is “a performance of an unlawful authority.”

I will read selected Place’s theoretical writings, appropriative work and social media output to show how her “not not poetry” performs authorial presence and absence on multiple levels to underscore the contemporary dangers of the ideological stabilization of the author-function. This will enable me to trace some of the present demarcations and reapportionments of the void left by the author’s disappearance (as per Foucault) and indicate how the shifts in modes of self-production, facilitated by advanced capitalism and new media, realigned the author, authority and authorship.

Thesis abstract: **Vanessa Place and Concept as Performance**

Taking the work of Vanessa Place for its point of departure, the thesis examines the phenomenon of conceptual writing (first defined in 2003 as a body of writing which shares the emphasis on appropriative techniques) as the most recent major movement in American poetry. Parallel to the 1960s conceptualism in visual arts, conceptual writing – with its assumption of the vantage point of “the end of poetry” – is seen as the current culmination of the avant-garde impulse implicit in Romanticism and most thoroughly theorized by post-structural thinkers. Accordingly, Place’s work is articulated as a corpus of attempts at performative intervention into the formal and institutional conventions of poetry. The thesis examines Place’s output and delineates the topics of *materiality*, *progress* and *affect* as concerns not only defining to her practice, but also providing a useful grid through which to look at the whole of contemporary American scene.

**Olga Pek** (\*1987) is a first-year doctoral student of English and American Literature at Charles University in Prague and a poet, translator and organizer. Her interests are contemporary US avant-garde poetry and gender in literature. Together with David Vichnar, PhD., she has edited *Terrain: Essays on the New Poetics* (Litteraria Pragensia, 2014). She is the director of Prague Microfestival and a co-editor of the Czech quarterly for contemporary poetry *Psi Vino* and the international revue *VLAK*. Her poetry translations from English have been published in the anthology *Polibek s rozvodnou* (“Kissing the Substation,” 2012).



HERMES paper abstract: **From the Construction of Authorship to the Construction of Cultural Identity: Ossian and the Czech Manuscripts of Dvůr Králové and Zelená Hora**

Since 1760, European literature has been haunted by a fervent dispute about the poems of Ossian and their editor / translator / author James MacPherson. Two hundred and fifty years of critical debates suggest that Ossian cannot be dismissed as a mere forgery: it allows us to observe and analyze a process of vastly influential “intercultural translation.” The development of Ossian criticism – from MacPherson’s contemporaries to nineteenth-century readers, Derick Thomson’s groundbreaking study *The Gaelic Sources of MacPherson’s Ossian* from 1952 and contemporary perspectives – reflects the changes in the approach to authorship.

To follow Foucault’s terminology, Macpherson may be, with certain reservations, considered one of the “initiators of discursive practices,” as he “put into circulation a certain number of resemblances and analogies.” The vast cultural impact of the poems of Ossian can be traced across Europe. In the Czech Lands, the Ossian affair inspired a charged controversy concerning allegedly ancient literary monuments, the so-called *Manuscript of Dvůr Králové* and *Manuscript of Zelená Hora*. The argument about their authorship was of immense social and political importance during the Czech national revival.

The paper will compare the construction of authorship in the case of Ossian and of the Czech manuscripts and their employment in the construction of cultural identity. It will also comment on the questions of authenticity and originality in relation to Ossian and the Manuscripts: although Foucault and other thinkers tend to dismiss the importance of these values in the assessment of literary texts, their role in the construction of cultural identities in the nineteenth century and even later cannot be overlooked.

Thesis abstract: **Political Issues in the Poetry of Ruaraidh MacThòmais / Derick Thomson**

Ruaraidh MacThòmais / Derick Thomson (1921 – 2012) was one of the most universal personalities of the Scottish Gaelic world in the twentieth century. Apart from making a strong impact as a lecturer, academic, translator, journalist and publisher, Thomson also published seven influential collections of poetry. Nonetheless, his work still awaits a due amount of critical response.

My dissertation focuses on political issues in Thomson’s poetry. Although Thomson remained a committed Scottish nationalist throughout his life, the study is not limited to overtly political poems: it included topics of broader social relevance such as religion, the past and present of the Gàidhealtachd, and the Gaelic language. Thomson’s opinions concerning political issues also found expression in his writing for *Gairm*, the seminal Gaelic quarterly he co-founded and edited, and I therefore attempt to cross-reference his articles and his poems.

Questions concerning the situation of the Gàidhealtachd, its position in Scotland and the role of Scotland in the UK and in Europe remain highly topical. By analysing the thought of one of Scotland’s most influential Gaelic scholars and poets, the thesis will offer new perspectives on topics such as Gaelic cultural and political nationalism and the theoretical basis of Gaelic cultural revival.

**Petra Johana Poncarová** (\*1988) is a PhD student at the Department of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures, Charles University, Prague. In May 2014, she completed an intensive two-term course in Gaelic at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, University of Highlands and Islands. She focuses on modern Scottish literature, mainly modern Scottish Gaelic poetry. In her PhD dissertation, she discusses political issues in Derick Thomson’s poetry and journalism. Other research interests include the works of Sorley MacLean, Edwin Muir, Tormod Caimbeul and Christopher Whyte. She has presented the results of her research at conferences in the Czech Republic, Scotland, Poland and Germany. She translates from English and Gaelic.



HERMES paper abstract: **'In the name of the father': Darwin, scientific authority, and literary assimilation**

If for Barthes writing is a 'special voice' whose origin cannot be traced and into which authorial subjectivity and identity becomes oblique and diffuse, it can be said that science presents us with an implicit theory of writing in which the opposite is true. For to ask Barthes's rhetorical question "Who is speaking in this way?" of *Principia Mathematica* or *Relativity: The Special and the General Theory* is to be met with answers (Newton, Einstein) that identify the specificity of the theories posited in these works, reaffirming the primacy of authorial consciousness, and restating their fundamental canonicity.

"Darwin" is a particularly significant - and paradoxical - example of this. For not only does his name refer to a specific, canonical theory or set of theories but also to a group of societal, economic, and philosophical ideas, to which Darwin himself did not adhere. Invocations of Darwin's name in Darwinian psychology or economic Darwinism, then, partake in the very Barthesian authorial parricide which they deny in grafting their projects to the diffuse authority of Darwin's name.

This paper will explore this paradoxical manoeuvre with reference to works by Hardy and Zola. These novelists' assimilations of Darwinism are both key moments in the construction of the popular vision of Darwin as well as subtle subversions of this. In examining specific instances of their appropriation and creative assimilation of Darwin we can illuminate the singular case of Darwinian science in relation to authoriality and the way in which literary art's engagement with Darwin, in particular, supplies us with more complex answers to Barthes foundational interrogative.

Thesis abstract: **Creative Materialisms: Darwin, Deleuze, and the Evolutionary Novel**

Darwin and Deleuze offer two distinct yet related materialist accounts of creation. Darwin's account is rooted in the dialectics and materialism of natural selection and sexual selection, and describes the emergence of individuals and species as a function of these mechanics. Deleuze, on the other hand, espouses a paradoxical materialism of virtualities, out of which beings emerge which are irreducible to their conditions of creation. This dissertation examines the relation between these two theories of creation and argues that Deleuze's philosophical enterprise is key to unlocking some of the radical valences of Darwin's thought.

Central to this work is a comparative literary study of key theoretical issues through interpretations of what I call the "Evolutionary Novel". These works, by Thomas Hardy, Émile Zola, Samuel Butler, Aldous Huxley, and Michel Houellebecq are written as explicit responses to the philosophical and literary challenge of Darwinian evolution. In a manner that is consonant with Deleuze's own theory of literary art, the evolutionary novel allows us not only to discuss the way in which each text plays with the signs, allegorical significances, and implications of Darwin's writing and thought, but also the way in which the specifically novelistic artwork effects a creative complication and transmutation of Darwinian evolution.

**Niall Sreenan** is a PhD student in Comparative Literature in University College London. He is writing his thesis on the relation between Darwinian and Deleuzian materialism and their representation in fiction, including novels by Thomas Hardy, Émile Zola, Aldous Huxley, and Michel Houellebecq. Other research interests include the writing and thought of Jakob von Uexüll, island narratives, and biopolitics, and the history of thought. Additionally, Niall works with UCL's Public and Cultural Engagement Department broadening awareness of current research in UCL through engaging with visitors to UCL's public museums. He is also a postgraduate representative for the British Comparative Literature association.



HERMES paper abstract: **Authorship in Poetry Audio Recordings**

Although literary theory and literary criticism seem to suggest otherwise, poetry uses a big variation of media besides the paper book. One of these media is the sound carrier. This paper explores the ways in which authorship in poetry audio recordings differs from authorship in live poetry performances and in written poetry. In his analysis model for performance poetry Peter Middleton places the poet in the centre: 'The author performs authorship by reading her or his own poetry.' (Middleton 2005: 22) There are, however, significant differences between live poetry and recorded poetry: recordings produce a 'debbed voice', they separate author and audience in time and space and visual elements of the performance are eliminated.

In this paper a multidisciplinary methodological framework is presented for analysing poetry on sound carriers by using Middleton's methodology and expanding it with elements from theories on 'oral poetry' by John Miles Foley, 'live poetry' by Julia Novak, 'close listening' by Charles Bernstein, 'liveness' by Philip Auslander, sound and the arts by Adalaide Morris and sound and cognition by Reuven Tsur and Leon Jakobovits James.

The methodology is applied to this paper's case study: *De zon en de wereld* (2003), which consists of a book of poetry ("De wereld") and a CD with recorded poetry ("De zon"). Arjen Duinker wrote both texts, but recorded "De zon" together with Kees 't Hart, making him a co-author of the audio poem. This paper aims to provide insight into the differences between oral, written and recorded poetry and to underline the importance of taking these differences into account when discussing authorship.

Thesis abstract: **Production, reception and experience of Dutch poetry off the page since 1966**

My research project aims to investigate the production, reception and experience of Dutch poetry off the page since 1966. Poetry off the page refers to all forms of poetry not printed in books, such as performance poetry, digital poetry, poetry in public areas and poetry on objects. This project addresses two main research questions. First, how is our experience of poetry changing? Currently there are more people who attend poetry performances or look up poetry on the internet than there are people who buy poetry books. Why do readers – or should we call them 'experiencers'? – prefer poetry off the page to poetry on the page? Secondly, does this tell us anything about our experience of art? A new perspective on poetry as a 'literary experience' rather than a mere reading activity seems to show that our experience of poetry is becoming more collective, democratic, interactive and influenced by multimedia. To what extent can this be seen as a reflection of the changes in our experience of art?

**Kila van der Starre** (1988) is a PhD researcher at Utrecht University. She studied Literary Studies and Language and Culture Studies at the universities of Utrecht and Ghent. Her research focuses on poetry off the page, such as poetry on stage, in public areas, on the internet and on objects. Kila van der Starre has published on contemporary Dutch poetry in *Ons Erfdeel*, *Poëziekrant* en *RektoVerso*. She is a member of the 'Oral Poetry Advisory Board' for the Flemish Literature Fund.



HERMES paper abstract:

**The Author as Agent in the Field: (Post-)Bourdieuian Approaches to the Author Today**

Among the various ways in which the figure of the author has “returned” in the past several decades into the study of literature, one of the most influential is the theory of literary field and authors as agents in the field. Initiated by Pierre Bourdieu, it has inspired other literary theorists and historians, e.g. Pascale Casanova, Jacques Dubois, Joseph Jurt, or Jérôme Meizoz, who have developed their own, in some respects divergent theories. Bourdieu’s “new science of works of art” is to a large extent a “new science of authors”, since the (historically changing) social role of the author is the site where the strategies of new literary works, trends, and groups – as well as the textual form of a work itself – are created and negotiated. It promises to provide us with a conceptual tool suitable for the complex description and explanation of a specific work in relation to its author, within the context of the particular field of cultural production, and even within the social space in general. In my paper I want to consider this approach to the author within the framework of recent theories of authorship (i.e. the “author outside the text” – the empirical author, the “career author”, the history of authorship, etc.) and trace the crucial aspects of post-Bourdieuian research. The theory of literary field and the author’s position within it – or his/her “posture” – is at the same time an attempt to resolve the broader question of mediation between the literary text and the social sphere; however, is the result not necessarily an oversimplification of the author-text relationship as well as of the many-faceted role of the author? And, more generally, is the problem of mediation and aesthetic autonomy vs. heteronomy of literature still as important as it was two decades ago when Bourdieu published his *Rules of Art* (1992)?

**Thesis abstract: Nothing beyond “social texts”? Challenges to the aesthetic character of literature**

In his Ph.D. thesis Josef Šebek focuses on the current debates about the aesthetic character of literature and art and the related problem of the mediation between the literary and the social. More “anti-aesthetic” arguments have been put forward in the last decades. Two of them are central to this dissertation: the “institutional” approach that traces the social logic of the specific “world of literature” (esp. Bourdieu, Casanova, Viala, Sapiro, Meizoz; Culler, Guillory) and the critique of the “the ideology of the aesthetic” presented by various streams of (post-)marxism, cultural studies, etc., among which British cultural materialism is analyzed more closely (esp. Williams, Sinfield, Dollimore). The paths of these two lines of thought are traced from their formulation in the 1980s to their more recent versions, their conceptual interrelations as well as complementarity are pointed out, and they are confronted with arguments for “the return to the aesthetic” in the study of literature. The final part consists of several interpretations of the works of the Czech postmodern author Ladislav Fuks (1923–1994), based on the discussed theories.

**Mgr. Josef Šebek** is finishing his Ph.D. thesis at the Institute of Czech and Comparative Literature, Faculty of Arts, Charles University, Prague. He is interested in context-oriented approaches to literature and the question of aesthetic autonomy, repetition in literary texts, and the works of several 20th century Czech writers. He has published articles and reviews in Czech academic journals and translated essays on literary theory and aesthetics from English. With Richard Müller he has recently co-edited the book *Texts in Circulation: Anthology of Cultural Materialist Approaches to Literature* (in Czech). He is also one of the editors of *Estetika: The Central European Journal of Aesthetics*.



HERMES paper abstract: **The role of intention in interpretation: Theory combined with empirical research on reading**

This paper examines the question of authorial intentions by a theoretical analysis of the role of intentions in understanding language, and by looking at empirical research on reading. The main argument is that an assumption about an utterer's intentions is an integral part of making sense of language (Wittgenstein, 1963), and this theoretical view is confirmed by empirical research on reading (e.g. Claassen, 2012; Gibbs, 1991). If the object of literary research is to deepen our understanding of literary texts, then the question of authorial intentions cannot be brushed aside. This does not mean that literary interpretation could not concentrate on something other than the author's intentions, such as a critical feminist reading, but such analyses become even more interesting if compared with what is understood to be the author's communicative aim.

Furthermore, the paper examines the nature of intentions in writing and the nature of literary reading. I argue that the intentions relevant in creative writing should be conceptualized as "intention-in-action" (Anscombe, 1958; Searle, 1983; Flower, 1988) rather than a detailed plan which precedes writing. Similarly, while reading, people do not process each detail of a text thoroughly but form a partial mental representation of many parts of the text (Sanford & Emmott, 2012). I argue that much of our understanding of literary texts remains in potential form unless we are prompted to verbalize these views. Hence, the tradition of explicating how each detail in a text contributes to a global interpretation is a highly specialized practice that differs greatly from ordinary reading and creative writing, and keeping this in mind might help to resolve many of the controversies in the discussion on intentions.

Thesis abstract: **Literary interpretation: Theory re-evaluated against empirical findings**

The dissertation focuses on studying the extent to which readers' interpretations of texts are idiosyncratic or similar, and examining how the readers' interpretations relate to the author's view of the text. The texts used are three short stories differing in thematic complexity, and each story has been read by about a hundred respondents. The main finding is that for the most part, readers tend to agree in their interpretations, and their views are also in line with the author's views. If the text reminds the reader of an emotionally charged experience that is close to a theme, this may colour the reader's interpretation. Otherwise, even readers with different cultural backgrounds tend to understand texts in much the same way. This suggests that literary texts can work as a bridge between people with different backgrounds.

**Cecilia Therman** is a doctoral student at the University of Helsinki. In her research, she looks at how readers actually interpret literary texts, and through the analysis of empirical data, wants to contribute to the discussion on the role of authorial intentions in interpretation, and the idiosyncratic or shared aspects of interpretation. So far she has published an article on the way in which the reminders that occur during reading influence interpretation, and another article which suggests a reader-oriented model of teaching literature.



HERMES paper abstract: **Shared Author Function in Arnon Goldfinger's *The Flat* (2011)**

Michel Foucault (1969) identifies the author with the function, among others, to limit the proliferation of meaning. Following this definition, I argue that, in the context of documentary films, this function is assumed not only by the filmmaker but also by the audience. I claim that this shared responsibility is the product of the ethical stance that the filmmaker and the audience take. Indeed, they are both authors in the sense that the filmmaker produces a narrative that is inscribed in his documentary, and the audience still has the final word as to how to interpret it.

I analyze this notion of shared "author function" with a close reading of the interviews that feature in Arnon Goldfinger's documentary *The Flat* (2011). After the filmmaker discovers that his late Jewish and Israeli grandparents remained friends with the Nazi couple von Mildensteins during and after WWII, he interviews and confronts his mother and the von Mildensteins' daughter, Edda, with this disconcerting friendship. I show that Goldfinger shares his interpretative authority of family archives with the audience by submitting it to the audience's final judgment.

I first analyze the way in which Arnon Goldfinger states his opinion on this subject by drawing a parallel between his mother's and Edda's, thus blurring the divide that separates the legacy of perpetrators and that of victims. Secondly, I discuss how Goldfinger shares his authority to interpret his family's past by hailing the audience and exhorting it to adopt an ethical stance and thus form an opinion on this matter.

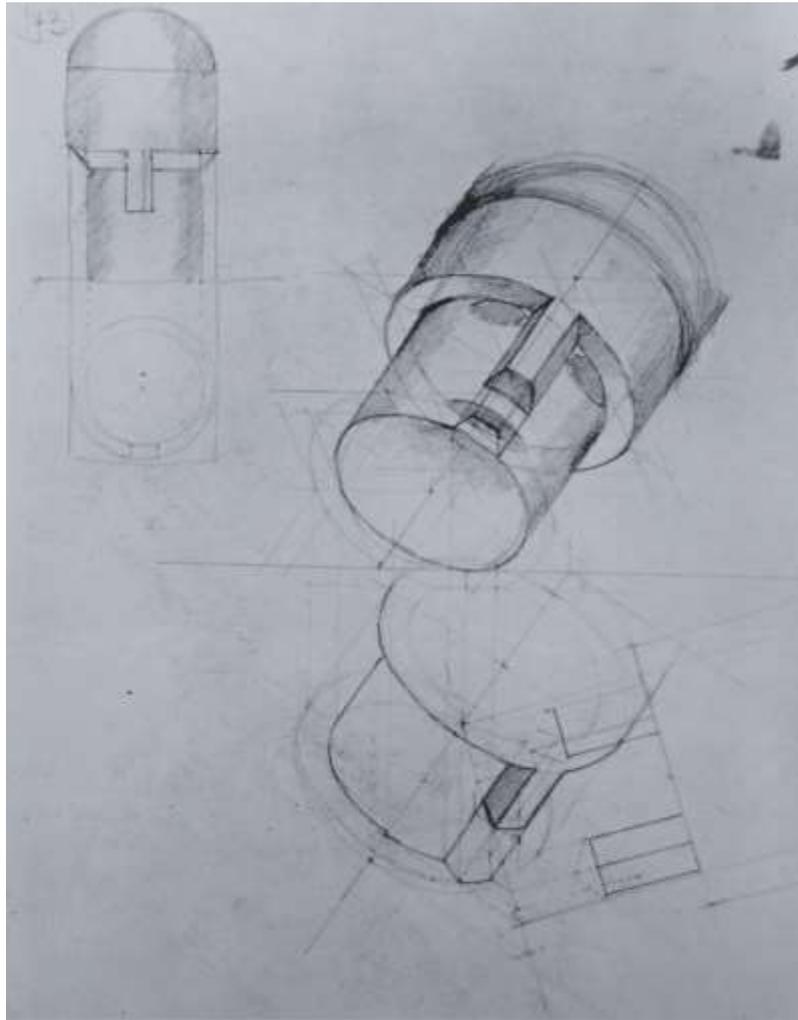
Thesis abstract:

**Nazi Legacy in Family Narratives: Response to an Incomplete *Vergangenheitsbewältigung***

Scholars in memory studies such as Jeffrey Olick and Harald Welzer point at a gap between cultural and communicative memory in Germany. While Germany publicly makes amends for the Nazi crimes and commemorates WWII victims, German victimhood and historical erosion are two common threads that emerge in private memory. I examine how family narratives that describe a Nazi family member in German literature and documentary films since the new millennium offer an approach to reconcile those two kinds of memory owing to a growing distance from the events of WWII. How do they engage with family narratives full of gaps and historical inaccuracies? How do narrators deal with a gap between communicative and cultural memory? I study the narrative strategies that the author employs to answer this question. I hypothesize that narrators can fill those gaps with historical knowledge, imagination, and confrontation with family members who are still alive. In this dissertation I hope to offer another perspective on Marianne Hirsch's concept of postmemory, here applied to children and grandchildren of Nazi perpetrators.

**Mélanie Yœurp** joined the German Ph.D. program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison as a Fulbright Scholar after having graduated with an MA from Bonn Universität (Germany) and Université Paris-Sorbonne (France). She is now working on her dissertation which explores the figure of Nazi perpetrators and bystanders in contemporary German family novels. Her interests include historiography, family narratives, the intersection of public and private memory, and migration.





Bohumil Kubišta, Geometric Study of a Head, 1910.

Front cover: Bohumil Kubišta, Meditation, 1915.  
Back cover: Bohumil Kubišta, Old Prague Motif, 1911.



