

ABSTRACTS

Volume XVI, No. 1 (31)/2025

Research Articles

THEORY, HISTORY AND LITERARY CRITICISM

Violence and Betrayal: Translation as a Window into Understanding Colonialism in R. F. Kuang's *Babel, or the Necessity of Violence*

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DOI 10.56177/jhss.1.16.2025.art.1

Abstract:

In this article I explore the ways in which the concept of *translation* is utilized throughout R. F. Kuang's novel *Babel, or the Necessity of Violence*, a work of speculative fiction which explores the colonial relations between Britain and China in the 19th century, in order to facilitate the understanding of colonialism and its penchant for destruction. Specifically, I use the methodology of critical race theory and critical race narratology in order to prove that the novel belongs to the category of ethnic counterstorytelling, and then move on to demonstrate how the concept of translation is employed as a literary device that permits historical recentering through fantasy, while also, on a metaphorical level, mirroring the perspectives on colonialism, intracultural trust and community belonging that the characters hold. In these ways, I argue that translation becomes a window into exploring the themes proposed by the novel, both internally, through the main character, and extrinsically, through the world built on its foundations as a magical system, while also exploring the consequences that these traumatic positions have on the main character's psyche.

Keywords: counterstorytelling, critical race narratology, Asian American literature, recent literature, colonialism

The Body in Ruins: Echoes of the First World War in Modern and Avant-Garde Aesthetics

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DOI 10.56177/jhss.1.16.2025.art.2

Abstract:

This article explores how the tragic experience of the First World War profoundly transformed artistic representations of the human body in modern and avant-garde aesthetics, particularly within Romanian literature and European visual arts. The war's devastating impact gave rise to a crisis of corporeality, reflected in disfigured, fragmented, and vulnerable depictions of the body. Such visual representations were conveyed through radical images of the body in the (radical) modern and avant-garde aesthetics. The vulnerability of the human body was linked to the catastrophic consequences of the war experience.

Romanian avant-garde writers such as Tristan Tzara, Ilarie Voronca or Ion Vineanu, alongside European artists like Otto Dix or George Grosz, responded with radical imagery that challenged traditional forms and expressed the psychological trauma of a disenchanted age.

Through a close reading of Alexandru Daia's war diary *Eroi la 16 ani*, the article illustrates the visceral experience of war and the bodily suffering it entailed, linking it directly to avant-garde motifs of chaos, decay, and existential crisis. The article argues that war led to a shift in both literature and art, where the body became a central symbol of fractures of modernity, bridging the realms of personal trauma and collective aesthetic revolt.

The horrors of the war, coupled with the radical artistic responses from avant-garde writers, underscore the fragility of the human body and its enduring vulnerability, marking a significant shift in the understanding of corporeality in modern artistic expressions.

Keywords: Romanian avant-garde, modernity, First World War, vulnerability, corporeality

From Brontë to Ishiguro: The Dystopian Evolution of the Boarding School Motif

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DOI 10.56177/jhss.1.16.2025.art.3

Abstract:

The present study proposes to examine the setting in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* as an important motif that invites comparisons to classic works while foregrounding the novel's dystopian elements. By engaging with Foucault's discursive ideas, this study will argue that *Never Let Me Go* transforms the traditional motif of boarding school as seen in such Victorian bildungsromans as *Jane Eyre* and *David Copperfield* into a biopolitical institution of care and control. It will examine the subject positions made available by this institution as well as the roles and activities that characters can adopt for themselves or assign to others. As this essay will demonstrate, these discursive positions are sustained through a medical gaze that reduces each character from an entity to a set of organs to be observed, examined, and labeled. The findings of this study suggest that *Never Let Me Go* could be interpreted as an allegorical tale of how modern institutions use discourses to normalize violence and erase individual agency under the pretext of progress and survival imperatives.

Keywords: bildungsroman, institution, discourse, subject position, gaze

De la războiul sexelor la cunoașterea de sine în *Scorpia* de Anne Tyler

Florica Bodiștean

DOI 10.56177/jhss.1.16.2025.art.4

From the War of the Sexes to Self-Knowledge in Anne Tyler's *Vinegar girl*

Abstract:

The study analyzes Anne Tyler's novel, *Vinegar Girl*, as a narrative rewrite of the well-known Shakespearean comedy *The Taming of the Shrew*, part of the Hogarth–Shakespeare project, started in 2015. Two levels on which the American writer's rewriting innovates are pursued: the discursive changes due to the change in the mode (from *mimesis* to *diegesis*, in the Aristotelian sense) and those related to the recontextualization of the subject and the infusion of a contemporary, post-feminist ethos. Anne Tyler emphasizes not the undermining of the misogynistic vision that was imputed to Shakespeare, but the relationship of the female character with her own self that she discovers through the "other", the other sex. The novel gives a current response to the traditional imaginary of the struggle for domination between the sexes by proposing the formula of "similarity in difference" as a *modus vivendi* in the couple, but also in a broader, socio-cultural horizon.

Keywords: Shakespeare, Anne Tyler, *Vinegar girl*, rewriting, transmodalization, scorpion-woman, post-feminism, immigrant

Referențialitate culturală și conceptuală în teoriile lui Virgil Nemoianu

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DOI 10.56177/jhss.1.16.2025.art.5

Cultural and Conceptual Referentiality in the Theories of Virgil Nemoianu

Abstract:

According to the Romanian theorist Virgil Nemoianu, the evolution of thought compels us to consider literature as interconnected with the changes in perception that occur everywhere in society and human history. The way the author chooses to express their ideas (with balance and using a methodology of details reminiscent of great cultural and historical events) reveals a classic equidistance related to the changes taking place within culture. The Romanian professor proposes a re-examination of past centuries, as well as creating a literary and critical mapping that allows us to observe the oscillations between the phenomenology of modernity and that of anti-modernity. This methodological detail can be seen in the studies dedicated to *Minor Romanticism*. As a relevant detail, *The Taming of Romanticism* is the study that emphasizes this perspective of cultural transformation, the revising of an era, but also the blurring of a perennial dominant trend – the exposure within literary texts of European Romanticism in relation to *mimesis* and *the idyllic literary description*.

The theorist Virgil Nemoianu notes in works such as *Micro-harmony*, *The Taming of Romanticism*, *The Triumph of Imperfection*, or *Postmodernism and Cultural Identities* historical facts, but does not judge the pejorative or historical accidents. Also, he does not draw hierarchies or destructive judgments, but examines subtle details, adjacent to literary / philological culture. The description of the cultural collage created by Professor Nemoianu becomes a map that notes personal opinions, but also an overview: objectively measuring the argumentative opinions of other specialists in the philological field. We believe that this is primarily an evidence of a special balance – which European academics forums tends to respect, especially regarding the working method, theories, and the investigation of literary text describing the European Romantic Centuries.

Keywords: degraded / minor *Romanticism*, canonicity, historical filters, conceptual delimitations

SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL STUDIES

The Salon, the Café, and the Art of Cards: Configurations of Late-Century Social Life

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DOI 10.56177/jhss.1.16.2025.art.6

Abstract:

This study explores the reconfiguration of sociability at the end of the 19th century, focusing on three emblematic spaces of interaction: the salon, the café, and the card table. These sites, deeply

embedded in the cultural fabric of the fin de siècle, served not only as stages for refined leisure and polite conversation, but also as subtle arenas of political maneuvering, image construction, and symbolic negotiation. By examining both the performative dimension of social rituals and the material culture associated with them – fashion, accessories, architecture, and etiquette – the article illuminates the emergence of a new *civilité*, one that reflects shifting gender roles, expanding public discourse, and evolving practices of memory and representation. Anchored in historical accounts, epistolary sources, and contemporary cultural theory, the analysis situates these *loci* of sociability within broader dynamics of modernity and national identity construction. As spaces of sociability, the salon and the café host new human types and serve as fertile ground for the emergence of activities inherent to social life. Card games, the learning of foreign languages, and the adoption of the era's behavioral code are representative practices for the individual at the turn of the century.

Keywords: fin de siècle sociability, salon culture, cafés, card games, symbolic spaces, memory sites

La masa starurilor literare

Dan Horațiu Popescu

DOI 10.56177/jhss.1.16.2025.art.7

Dining with Literary Stars

Abstract:

The author intends to capture significant moments from the history of the Romanian P.E.N. Club, especially in the years right after WWI. An emphasis is placed on the activity of Marcu Beza, the Romanian Consul in London at the time. Dragosh Protopopescu, the Executive Secretary of the Romanian P.E.N. Centre, is also mentioned within the larger social and cultural context of the events organized by the English P.E.N. in the capital of Great Britain.

Keywords: P.E.N. Club Romania, Marcu Beza, Dragoș Protopopescu, P.E.N. English/International, 1920s

Ethnic Stereotypes and Dimensions of Identity. Cross-Cultural Investigation

Tatiana Roșca

DOI 10.56177/jhss.1.16.2025.art.8

Abstract:

A stereotype is a complex mechanism, through which social connotations of personal and business qualities are passed on from generation to generation, and even more than that. In fact, it contains some filters which allow us to highlight the defining characteristics of the subject, on the basis of which we can draw the image of the person representing the ethnic group. In this context, the logic of the research is based on the principle of value judgment, which allowed us to answer the following questions: *How is the person representing the ethnic group perceived today? What are his/her distinctive features? Can living environment and context have an impact on value judgment?*. Questions to which we tried to answer through the social representations of Moldovan adolescents who are immigrants in Italy and Moldovan adolescents who live in the Republic of Moldova.

Keywords: Moldovan immigrant adolescents in Italy, ethnic group representation, stereotypical image, social context, migration

Examining the Effects of Attitudes on English: A Contextualized Exploration of TVT Institute Learners

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DOI 10.56177/jhss.1.16.2025.art.9

Abstract:

English proficiency is vital for the career success of technical and vocational trainees, yet factors influencing proficiency in technical contexts remain underexplored. This study examined the impact of behavioural, cognitive, and motivational attitudes on English proficiency among 46 Ethiopian technical vocational trainees, with a focus on potential gender differences. Data were collected through a quantitative survey and standardized language assessments. Hierarchical regression analyses revealed that attitudes significantly predicted proficiency, with cognitive attitudes having the strongest influence. However, gender did not moderate the relationship between attitudes and proficiency. These results highlight the importance of fostering adaptive attitudes to enhance language proficiency among vocational learners. Despite aligning with previous research, the lack of gender-based interaction effects suggests the need for a more nuanced understanding of language acquisition processes. The findings underscore the importance of targeted interventions to support the development of career-oriented language skills in diverse learning environments.

Keywords: behavioural attitude, cognitive attitude, English proficiency, motivational attitude, technical and vocational trainees