

ABSTRACTS

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Research Articles

THEORY, HISTORY AND LITERARY CRITICISM

Humour of Workers Protests and Economic Inequality in South Africa

Idowu James Adekunle

DOI 10.56177/jhss.2.16.2025.art.1

Abstract:

This study explores the intersection of humour and social activism in South Africa, focusing on workers' protests through the lens of Carl Jung's psychoanalytic theory. A live video recording of Trevor Noah's standup comedy serves as the primary data source, offering a unique perspective on the role of humour in reflecting and shaping social narratives. Using performance analysis, the study examines how humour is employed to critique and challenge social injustices, highlighting the complexities of power dynamics and resistance in South Africa. The analysis reveals how humour can be both a coping mechanism and a form of resistance, allowing individuals to navigate and challenge oppressive systems. The findings suggest that humour can play a crucial role in social activism, providing a platform for marginalized voices to be heard and amplifying demands for social justice. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of the relationship between humour, power, and resistance, offering insights into the ways in which humour can be harnessed to promote social change and challenge systemic injustices in South Africa.

Keywords: workers, activism, stand-up performance, protest, inequality

Hamletul contemporan și instinctul vital: Ian McEwan, *Coajă de nucă*

Florica Bodiștean

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Contemporary Hamlet and the Vital Instinct: Ian McEwan's, *Nutshell*

Abstract:

The study aims to analyze one of the recent narrative rewritings of Shakespeare's tragedy *Hamlet*, namely the novel *Nutshell* by Ian McEwan (2016), following the artistic and ideological effects of the British writer's intervention in the known plot. My interpretation detects, as an axis of textual coherence, the psychoanalytic dimension – in a Freudian line – of the mother-son relationship to which the novel gives a physical content by imagining an unborn Hamlet, in umbilical dependence on the mother's womb. Also, the reversals of vision that lead to the configuration of a contemporary Hamlet, the product of a consumerist and hedonistic society, are revealed: the vital instinct, the offensive attitude, individualism.

Keywords: Shakespeare, Ian McEwan, psychoanalysis, vital instinct, individualism, criticism of contemporary society

African American Spirituality: Icons of a Nation in Selected Novels by Zora Neale Hurston

Ghufran Abd Hussein

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Abstract:

In our article we examine the deep connection between African American literature and spirituality, demonstrating how faith, folklore, and tradition have profoundly shaped both identity and cultural resilience. Beginning with slave narratives and spirituals, where the story of Moses and the Israelites inspired hope for freedom, we trace how African American writers used religion and folklore as tools of resistance and self-expression. Being both a novelist and an anthropologist, Zora Neale Hurston's novels are rich in cultural observation. Hurston's unique perspective, shaped by her upbringing and encounters with influential figures, set her apart from her contemporaries. Despite facing criticism for omitting overtly political themes, her work authentically captured the experiences of blacks in the South, providing a nuanced exploration of African American folklore and showcasing the complex nature of her literary legacy. The deliberate emphasis on Hurston's contributions deepens our understanding of African American spirituality, culture, and resilience within the broader societal context.

Keywords: African-American literature, spirituality, religion, folklore, anthropology, myths

The Catholic Imagination in the Postmodern Condition: Narrative as Sacrament in Andrew Greeley's Fiction

Mark Anthony G. Moyano

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Abstract:

This study reexamines the fiction of Andrew M. Greeley through the lens of postmodern literary theory. While Greeley has been popularly regarded as a clerical storyteller or dismissed as a writer of popular Catholic melodrama, little sustained scholarship has positioned his work within the discourse of postmodernism. Addressing this critical gap, this study argues that Greeley's novels, spanning clerical sagas (*The Cardinal Sins* 1981; *Thy Brother's Wife*, 1982), science fiction (*The Final Planet*, 1987), and the *Nuala Anne McGrail* mystery series (1994-2009), exhibit defining features of postmodern literature. This study employs close textual analysis informed by key postmodern theorists: Lyotard's incredulity toward metanarratives, Hutcheon's poetics of parody and historiographic metafiction, and Jameson's cultural logic of capitalism. Also, the analysis is supplemented by theological insights from Tracy, Kearney, and Greeley's own *The Catholic Imagination* (2000). Comparative readings demonstrate how Greeley destabilizes clerical and ecclesial grand narratives, hybridizes popular genres, commodifies faith through mass-market fiction, and engages in intertextual and metafictional play, while simultaneously sacralizing the fragment through a distinct Catholic imagination. The findings establish Greeley as a postmodern novelist whose fiction integrates theological vision with aesthetic strategies typically associated with secular postmodernism. This reframes his literary significance: rather than marginal popular entertainment, his novels participate in the broader cultural negotiation of faith, pluralism, and irony.

Keywords: Andrew M. Greeley, postmodernism, Catholic imagination, historiographic metafiction, theology and literature

Oszkar Mailand and the Romanian Curse

Monica Negoescu

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Abstract:

In 1891 an interesting article about the Romanian curse, entitled *Der Fluch in der siebenbürgisch-rumänischen Volkspoesie* (*The Curse in the Transylvanian Traditional Poetry*), appeared in Leipzig in the prestigious journal *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde*, edited by Dr. Edmund Veckenstedt. The author, a Hungarian scholar from 19th-century Transylvania, published the article in the same issue of the renowned journal in which other Transylvanian Saxon scholars published their studies on Romanian traditions. The present paper aims to be a critical look at Oskar Mailand's article, whose existence is known but whose content is quasi-unknown due to the fact that access to foreign journals was almost impossible in the past. What is certain, however, is that the Transylvanian scholars of the 19th century, both Saxon and Hungarian, placed Romanian culture on the European map, a merit that cannot be disputed.

Keywords: Oskar Mailand, curse, traditional poetry, 19th century

Banned – Challenged – Censored. A Story of Local Activism Fighting Book Censorship through Art

Toma Sava

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Abstract:

This article explores the shifting landscape of book banning from the mid-20th century to the present, drawing on both academic discourse and the 2013 art installation *Banned - Challenged – Censored*; the study argues that artistic activism offers a complementary perspective to scholarly debates by juxtaposing abstract statistics to a tangible, community-driven engagement with censorship, intellectual freedom, and cultural memory. Given the sheer volume of banned works, scholarly and public discussions must rely frequently on abstraction. While such approaches can highlight systemic patterns of censorship, they also risk canceling the singularity of individual works.

Keywords: Book banning, censorship, intellectual freedom, community activism, banned books, art installation

Terminologia medicală referitoare la ocupații sub lupa actualității: *navigator de pacienți, concierge doctor, concierge medical* și alte împrumuturi

Alina-Paula Neamțu

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Medical Terminology Related to Occupations under the Spotlight: *Patient Navigator, Concierge Doctor, Medical Concierge* and Other Loanwords

Abstract:

Undergoing continuous development alongside technological advances and improvements in training, the medical field is called upon to provide the most appropriate terms to designate emerging occupations, new conditions, or treatments. Specialized medical language is often enriched with terms derived from common language, to which speakers assign metaphorical meanings based on analogies of certain functions. Many specialized terms are borrowed from English or other internationally used languages, as Romanian does not have a suitable equivalent. This is the case with phrases such as “patient navigator”, “medical navigator”, “nurse or assistant navigator”, “patient advisor”, “patient advocate”, or “concierge doctor”. The purpose of this article is to explain such terms and to track their inclusion in Romanian language dictionaries or specialized medical dictionaries. In addition, we are interested in discovering their semantic evolution, what their original meaning was, and whether or not they have undergone any degradation, broadening, or narrowing of meaning. The examples selected are mainly from social media, but also from various websites and medical journals. These terms demonstrate once again that the English influence is strongly felt in the current medical vocabulary.

Keywords: medical specialized language, common language, English borrowings, metaphor, synonymy, compulsory terms/ phrases

ChatGPT și dificultățile conjugării românești: o analiză critică

Anamaria-Bianca Tonț

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ChatGPT and the Challenges of Romanian Verb Conjugation: A Critical Analysis

Abstract:

This study investigates the accuracy of ChatGPT in conjugating Romanian verbs of the fourth conjugation, focusing on those endings that are particularly sensitive to morphological variation: *-ui*, *-ăi*, *-ări*, and *-ăni*. A corpus of 728 verbs was compiled and systematically tested by requesting the conjugation of each verb in the present indicative. The results reveal a heterogeneous performance: while ChatGPT correctly conjugates verbs with stable paradigms (e.g., verbs in *-ăi*), it shows significant limitations when dealing with variable or less frequent forms (e.g., verbs in *-ări* and *-ăni*). Overall, only about one-third of the verbs were conjugated entirely correctly. The errors identified follow recurrent patterns, such as the overgeneralization of the *-esc* suffix, the omission of consonants in the stem, and lexical confusions caused by analogies with high-frequency verbs. These findings demonstrate that ChatGPT tends to favor productive and frequent patterns, but fails to capture the morphological nuances of Romanian grammar. Although the model may serve as a useful auxiliary tool for practicing regular paradigms, the study concludes that its use in grammar teaching requires a critical and carefully supervised approach to prevent the reinforcement of incorrect forms.

Keywords: ChatGPT, Romanian language, verb conjugation, fourth conjugation, grammatical accuracy, morphological variation, language teaching, artificial intelligence

Anglicisme din domeniul educației, învățământului și cercetării

Voica Radu-Călugăru

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Anglicisms in the Field of Education, Teaching and Research

Abstract:

Entitled *Anglicisms in the field of education, teaching and research*, the article aims to address aspects that present the dynamics of these borrowings in the lexicon of the Romanian language, as reflected at the level of academic dictionaries, as well as in that of specialized studies, highlighting the elements of novelty, the permanent influx of new borrowings from the sphere of education in the lexicon of the Romanian language, which contribute to the creation of an internationalized vocabulary. The study then focuses on the concept of *gamification* which represents an element of novelty in the lexicon of the Romanian language, being present in the teaching and learning process, in articles, conferences, various activities; the entry of the word is verified in the dictionaries of the Romanian language and then the presence in different texts in order to analyze the impact of the term.

Keywords: Anglicisms, Romanian language lexicon, education, gamification, globalization

SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL STUDIES

The Role of Social Media in Democratic Societies: from Freedom to Censorship

Flavius Ghender

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Abstract:

The promise of civil liberties lies at the heart of the development of social media in democratic societies. Initially, the effects of social media on the quality of democracy were viewed with enthusiasm: overcoming institutional barriers, reviving democratic citizenship in the digital space, limiting forms of censorship, and establishing a new “agora” that gives citizens a voice. Recent developments, however, show that freedom of information brings numerous risks, opening the way to manipulation and unfair practices. New forms of government control are needed to counter the vulnerabilities of the new communication system. In this article, I analyze the evolving mechanisms through which democratic deliberation is pursued, focusing on how developments in technology and transformations in communication systems influence political decision-making processes that may result in various forms of censorship or limitations on individual freedoms.

Keywords: social media, Populism, censorship, democracy, hybrid media system

Beyond Bread Alone. On Scientism, Work and Culture in Contemporary Education

Ioana-Gabriela Nan

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Abstract:

The aim of the article is to explore the limitations of relying solely on material comfort, science, or work as the foundation for a meaningful life. Drawing on philosophical and historical perspectives, it argues that true human flourishing requires more than physical sustenance or technological advancement – it depends on purpose, autonomy, culture, and human connection. In order to advance this point, the text critiques the dominance of scientism and technocentrism, warning against neglecting the symbolic and humanistic dimensions essential to education and ethical development in an age shaped by AI and rapid technological change. To complement its critical approach, it examines contemporary cultural behaviours among the younger generation by presenting survey findings that highlight the evolving challenges in preparing them for a meaningful life beyond employment. Finally, it considers “the two cultures” and the possibility of a restored collaboration between science and the humanities in their strive for this goal and, eventually, for human self-understanding.

Keywords: science, humanities, culture, work, education, AI technology

Zur beruflichen Entwicklung ungarischer und deutscher Volksschullehrpersonen (1867-1914)

Krisztina Kovács

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On the Professional Development of Hungarian and German Elementary School Teachers (1867-1914)

Abstract:

In order to understand the role of teachers today, which requires new tasks, we need to see the professional development of primary school teachers in a historical context. This study deals with elementary school teachers and the teaching profession during the period of dualism. Focusing on the period between 1867 and 1914, it takes the reader into the world of Hungarian and German elementary school teachers. The emergence of the profession of elementary school teachers can be seen as part of the professionalization processes in modern societies, which justifies a brief overview of the theoretical framework of professionalization and, in this context, an interpretation of the basic concepts. We turn to some research on the history of professionalization, the results of which can be used to describe the theoretical framework of the professional development of elementary school teachers. The analysis of German school reforms in this article focuses on Prussia as the social and educational system that has the most in common with Hungary among Western European countries.

Keywords: professionalization, elementary school teacher profession, elementary school, elementary teacher, modernization