

COGNITIVE STUDIES OF CULTURE

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Under Pressure: Norms, Rules, and Coercion in Linguistic Analyses and Literary Readings

Alexander BERGS (Osnabrück University)

For more than 25 years linguists have studied the phenomenon of coercion (or type-shifting) in which a mismatch between linguistic elements lies at the heart of a (new) reading for a given utterance, as in (1) and (2).

- (1) She smiled herself an upgrade. (Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy, first mentioned by Adele Goldberg)
- (2) I've had too much Britney Spears today, I need some AC/DC now.

In both cases semantically or grammatically incompatible elements seem to combine and render a perfectly interpretable utterance. 'Smile' is an intransitive verb, so you cannot combine it with any object, let alone a reflexive complement as in (1). And yet, native speakers will automatically and without objection interpret (1) as 'She smiled in such a way that [they] gave her an upgrade'. In (2) the personal name 'Britney Spears' does not allow for any modification by quantifiers such as 'much' or 'many'. And yet, (2) is easily interpretable as 'I have heard too much music in the style of Britney Spears today, I need some music by AC/DC now'. These new readings are coerced out of those particular mismatches.

At first sight, it appears as if coercion would be an "anything goes" kind of license. However, this does not seem to be the case. Even with coercion as a mechanism to resolve mismatch, some utterances remain (almost) uninterpretable, such as (3).

- (3) Colorless green ideas sleep furiously. (Chomsky 1957)

The exact boundaries and limits of coercion, however, are still unclear, as are its exact relations to other principles and mechanisms, such as metaphor and metonymy or blending (for an up-to-date exposition and discussion of coercion, see the papers in Lauwers & Willems 2011).

The present paper will investigate the role and nature of coercion in linguistic analyses and will then put this into the perspective of literary readings. On the basis of some exemplary analyses of both poetry and prose texts from 18th to 20th century literature in English it will be argued that some fundamental principles of literary practice (such as foregrounding or deviation) should actually be seen as coercive linguistic activities. This is particularly interesting insofar as coercion itself might prove to be a universal mechanism of human cognition, which can even be shown to have significant neurocognitive underpinnings (cf. de Almeida et al. 2011b; Husband et al. 2011). If this were indeed the case, we would expect it to play at least some role in literary practices.

However, this paper will also have to address some problems in using coercion as a mechanism in literature. In particular, it will have to discuss how we can take coercion beyond the sentence level and use it on the level of texts. Moreover, and perhaps also more importantly we will also have to ask critically what exactly the influences of socio-cultural factors in the production and reading of literature (see e.g., Zunshine 2010) are. Coercion might be a universal mechanism (cf. Bartlett's 1932 effort-after-meaning principle), and yet, different socio-cultural contexts lead to different readings. More interestingly even, different periods seem to have called for different uses of the principle of foregrounding by mismatch and coercion. Some forms of literature (such as Dada poetry or Joyce's *Finnegans' Wake*) thus can perhaps also be litmus tests for the limits of mechanisms such as coercion.

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Afrophone Literature as a Prototypical Form of African Literature: Insights from Prototype Theory

Adams BODOMO (University of Vienna)

What is the most prototypical form of African literature? Shouldn't we be using African languages to produce African literary texts, shouldn't we produce more Afrophone African literature compared to Europhone African literature or Afro-Europhone literature? This issue underlies what the Ivorian writer, Amadou Kourouma, terms as 'diplosie' (Kourouma 1991), the reality that the vast majority of African writers presumably think in one language and express themselves (speak, enchant, or write) in another. This problematic, crystalized in major debates between Ngugi wa Thiongo (e.g. Ngugi 1986) and others, on the one hand, and Chinua Achebe (e.g. Achebe 1989) and others, on the other hand, has resulted in great challenges as to how we can define or even conceptualize the discipline of African literature. Is it literature written by Africans in African languages for Africans (Afrophone literature) or is it literature written by anybody including non-Africans in non-African languages for non-Africans? Or is it somewhere in-between these two extremes? The paper discusses several positions on this major question in African literature before advancing a novel proposal based on insights and evidence from prototype theory within Linguistics and the Cognitive Sciences (e.g. Rosch 1977, Wittgenstein 2001, and Taylor 2003). This proposal leads to a somewhat provocative conclusion about the gradation of African literatures, where *African language literatures* or Afrophone literatures, comprise the core, proto-typical category in a 21st Century African literature constellation, whereas foreign language and diasporic literatures such as *Afro-European literatures*, *Afro-American literatures*, and *Afro-Chinese literatures* are the hybrid and thus more recessive, peripheral types of African literature.

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From I to We: Collective Knowledge Creation in Socio-Epistemological Innovation Processes

Gloria BOTTARO,

Katharina Rötzer, Markus Peschl and Martina Hartner-Tiefenthaler (University of Vienna)

Innovation is not a one-dimensional phenomenon, but always emerges as a result of a highly complex network of interacting actors, dynamics, and constraints. It is intrinsically *social* and *epistemological* and is *not* something that is accomplished by an individual or a *maverick* (Dodgson & Gann, 2010; et al.). Hereby innovation as a creation of knowledge is understood as a permanently changing and highly dynamic team process. For investigating this process more thoroughly, a radically interdisciplinary university course setting was designed and investigated. For several months students had to work in knowledge creation teams with the goal to create an innovative prototype.

Our preliminary research shows that high performance teams establish a specific team culture, enabling them to collectively experience the creation of knowledge. The data shows that students undergo a change in perspective; they experienced a shift in their patterns of thinking from an “I-perspective” to a “We-perspective”. They report the collective emergence of ideas, most prominently characterized by the incapability to afterwards tell who contributed in what way. Furthermore students seem to let go their concept of individuality regarding innovation during the process, allowing them to act and think on a collective level of knowledge creation.

From an epistemological point of view we assume that knowledge is actively created by a subjective agent (Glaserfeld, 1995). Yet our data shows the importance of the team level for innovation processes. In the present paper we try to explore how individual minds can reach a level of collective knowledge creation. Therefore we will investigate the potential of different cognitive theories and concepts (Theory of Mind, collective mind, team cognition, and the like) for explaining the observed phenomena.

Cultural Conventions in Art-Perception

Hanna BRINKMANN (University of Vienna)

The connection between artwork, culture and the spectator’s eye has played a seminal role in art-historical discourses since the late 19th century, not least at the University of Vienna. Recently theoretical speculations about an “European“ and an “Asian“ way of looking at art have been expressed in the catalogue of the exhibition “Japan - Fragility of Existence” in the Leopold Museum in Vienna (28.09.2012-04.02.2013). The initial hypothesis of this idea is, that Europe and Asia have visual cultures that differ very much and that these differences have an impact on specific conventions in the perception of art.

Assuming that the major elements of art-perception are the actual seeing (eye-movements) plus cognitive and emotional reactions to the artwork, the central part of this project is a cross-cultural eye-tracking-study comparing Japanese and Austrian participants of similar age, gender, education and expertise beholding Japanese and European paintings. Additionally, information about their familiarity with specific cultural conventions is collected as well as their personal reflections and feelings about the presented artworks. First results of this study will be presented and put up for discussion.

Some Ups and Downs of Systematizing Expectations: Past and Present, Traditional and Modern

Daniel CANDEL BORMANN (Universitat de Alcala, Spain)

The following paper proposes ways in which we can fruitfully systematize our collective subconscious and use it for the analysis of texts. It does so with the help of a cognitive tool of fictional analysis published in *Poetics Today*, *Semiotica*, and as a textbook in UTB. This tool organizes four semantic fields – nature, society, the supernatural and individuality – into a series of basic patterns which, among other things, help us understand how we stereotype the modern and traditional cultures that underlie many of the readerly expectations we bring to bear on fiction.

The paper will briefly present the tool, above all its semantic configuration, its connection with modal logic, and the possible modern and traditional worlds it creates and works with. It will then focus on a series of fictions to show how starting from these possible configurations of modern and primitive worlds we can make sense of many texts. The paper will then use the tool to analyze a series of fictions which organize themselves against the background of primitive and modern worlds, sometimes challenging the semantic configuration of these worlds – and our expectations - in different ways. Such fictions are the children’s story *The Gruffalo*, the arrival of Milton’s Satan in *Paradise Lost*, the comic “Baba Yaga” from the *Hellboy* series, the Pixar-movie *The Incredibles*, a comparison of some passages from the Anglo-Saxon and from Zemecki’s *Beowulf* or Poe’s “Fall of the House of Usher”.

More than the Sum of its Parts: Perceiving Complexity in the Visual Arts

Laura COMARE (University of Vienna)

Back in the 1960s and 1970s the psychologist Daniel Berlyne suggested that interest and preference, as expressions for aesthetic experience, are mainly dependent on the complexity of the perceived image. In the following decades complexity has repeatedly been shown to be influential in the experience of visual art, to such a degree as intermediately complex artworks are preferred over highly complex or very simple ones, because they neither overextend the beholders, nor bore them.

Interestingly, the definition of complexity used in existing studies is mostly bound to the formal criteria of the perceived artwork, such as the number of elements that form a scene, their heterogeneity, or the irregularity of the depicted forms, ignoring the conceptual or iconographical complexity arranged behind the formal structure. However, the cognition of the underlying conceptual, content related aspects of a painting is crucial for the whole process of aesthetic perception and valuation of a painting. An artwork is indeed theoretically but not in the practical experience of a beholder, separable in form and content. The existing definitions of complexity are therefore inadequate and need to be amended. Simply combining the existing visual complexity assumptions with conceptual and iconographical aspects is insofar problematic, as the decoding process, which takes place when we try to infer meaning from a visual representation, is highly dependent on subjective characteristics like the level of specific knowledge. Consequently in my paper I argue that complexity can no longer be defined as a more or less objective

characteristic of artworks, but instead needs to be understood as a dynamic concept, which only arises in the process of beholding itself.

I tested the mechanisms and determinants involved in the complexity valuation of artworks in a detailed survey with 30 participants, varying according to expertise. My paper will show to what extent perceived complexity is dependent on objective, formal criteria and to which degree the existing definition needs to be altered by a subjective approach, as outlined above.

Experiencing from Within: Poetry and Introspection

Thomas EDER (University of Vienna)

Analytic philosopher Kendall L. Walton has provocatively proposed that poetry should be described as thoughtwriting: “Speechwriters compose speeches for others to deliver; speechwritings are speeches composed for this purpose. By thoughtwriters I mean writers who compose texts for others to use in expressing their thoughts (feelings, attitudes). The texts thoughtwriters compose are thoughtwritings.” (Walton 2011, 455). Especially lyrical poetry encourages its reader to participate in the (inner) experiences of its writer, a “poem can be perceived [...] as if it were the speech or thought of another person” (Elliott in Walton 2011, 460). Readers slip into the poet’s mental shoes, as they empathize with her feelings, emotions etc.

This philosophical proposal seems plausible, especially in the light of cognitive studies of literature. The enormous advantages of cognitive approaches derive from empirical studies which can (sometimes) validate (or refute) the assumptions of “classical” literary scholarship (e.g. the speculations based on stylistics). Researchers working in the field of empirical studies, however, often use introspectively gained assumptions as starting points for the designing of their experiments. On the other hand subjects being tested are frequently exposed to questions which require introspection and introspective reports in order to be answered.

How readers succeed in interpreting poems is a complex question which may not be answered by simply claiming that poems are thoughtwritings. It is nevertheless a fascinating task to explore new approaches to the thought processes and emotional experiences which are shared between the poet and his/her readers. Special emphasis will be on texts and poetic verses dealing with the experience of time (among them texts by Walter Benjamin, Franz Josef Czernin, Gottfried Benn).

In my paper I will sketch how some answers to these intricate questions may be offered by a carefully adopted version of introspection during reading (online processes) and during attempts to understand poems which have been read (offline processes). A theory of introspection seems the only way to achieve reliable and significant results.

“The Last Word” in Cognition and Culture

Margaret H. FREEMAN (Myrifield Institute for Cognition and the Arts)

The conference raises several questions for debate. The ones I will be concerned with in my presentation are: “In what ways do literature and culture enable us to gain a sense of what is

going on in the minds of other people? and “Do the cognitive sciences offer new approaches to the understanding of the production and consumption (or aesthetic experience) of culture?”.

My specialty is literature, and especially poetry. I will therefore attempt to show in this brief presentation that indeed we are able to experience something of what others are thinking and feeling through the reading of poetry, and that we can explain the ways we do so through the methodologies of the cognitive sciences. Furthermore, in discussing Matthew Arnold’s poem, “The Last Word,” I hope to show that a cognitive-cultural approach can illuminate both the poem itself and the motivations of the poet that caused him to write it, a combined approach that neither purely cognitive nor a literary-cultural approach can achieve on their own. My cognitive aesthetic analysis challenges two literary critical comments on this poem that argue 1) the poem doesn’t work and 2) the tone is humorous. However, the cognitive analysis of itself doesn’t explain what Arnold might have been getting at or his motivations for writing the poem. A cultural analysis, on the other hand, along with the aesthetic, can do so.

Extending the Mind into the Literary Past

Peter GARRATT (University of Durham)

What is at stake in the theoretical move to (re)integrate mind, cognition and environment under the rubric of extended, embodied and distributed cognition? How is it influencing our understanding of literary texts and literary theory? What relationship, if any, can be ventured between models of cognitive extension and historicist criticism? This paper will seek to map the intellectual territory on which cognitive extension is staked, assessing the rise of these approaches in the philosophy of cognitive science and their uptake in cultural theory more broadly. Then I will move to consider the specifically literary interest that could be entertained by extending the extended mind to fictive textual representation and to the question of literature’s historical embeddedness and its distinctive reflexive/aesthetic dimension, which I will discuss in relation to qualities of readerly immersion and distancing. Examples will come from nineteenth-century writers including Dickens and George Eliot. In mapping this field, I hope to offer a perspective that communicates between two models of ‘literature and science’ scholarship, the historicist and the stylistic.

Cognition of the Other behind the Mask of Facial Disfigurement: Willa Cather’s “The Profile”

Gudrun M. GRABHER (University of Innsbruck)

Human beings encounter each other “face to face,” argues philosopher Emmanuel Levinas, and in this encounter it is the Other’s face that demands of me to ethically respond to its ‘owner.’ But Levinas is not concerned about the face in its phenomenological manifestation, its physical visibility. Rather, the face is the key to the Other in his/her wholeness, the Other’s essence, which is invisible. In the encounter between a “normal” and a disfigured face, the opposite happens: While non-disfigured faces go unnoticed, disfigured ones draw attention, and the deviation from the norm, the disfigurement, takes center stage. The disfigured face becomes all the more visible

in its physical manifestation, and instead of referring to the essence of its 'owner,' its cancels him/her out. The Other is reduced to his/her facial disfigurement.

An analysis of narratives on facial disfigurement on the basis of cognitive-scientific theories can help us "gain a sense of what is going on in the mind" of the disfigured person, who – in his/her wholeness – is locked up behind the mask of his/her disfigurement, as I will argue and try to demonstrate by means of the exemplary analysis of Willa Cather's short story "The Profile". Levinas insists that the Other's face speaks to me of the holiness and wholeness of the person who owns the face. A disfigured face is deprived of this "speaking ability," but seeks, and finds, other ways of appealing to me through his/her special "mask".

Part of my book-length study in progress.

Bridging the "Two Cultures": Cognitive Approaches in the Humanities

Marcus HARTNER (Bielefeld University)

Despite growing interest in cognitive approaches within the humanities over the past years, many scholars still remain sceptical towards this development. Reasons for this may lie in the field's lack of a common theoretical framework, or, for example in literary studies, in an old-fashioned concern about the "infiltration and contamination by other disciplines" (Waugh). Another reason can be found in the epistemological and methodological uncertainties surrounding the intersection of empirical (cognitive) science and (non-empirical) literary and cultural studies. Problems such as the "explanatory gap" between mind and brain (Levin), or the different aims of scientific and literary research (Adler/Gross) have not escaped literary criticism. They have given rise to a critical debate on the potential, the scope, and the problems of cognitive approaches (e.g. Jackson; Adler/Gross; Zymner). With a few exceptions, however, contributions to this meta-debate have rather highlighted the field's promises and problems than reflected on methodologically sound ways of conceptualizing cognitive research.

My paper addresses this shortcoming and engages in a discussion of general conceptual criteria for the academic meeting of literature/culture and science. Drawing on Patrick Hogan's model of the structural relationship between different levels of scientific investigation, and the work of critics such as Gregory Currie, Julia Mansour, William Paulson, and Patricia Waugh, it outlines a set of theoretical and methodological criteria for cognitive literary & cultural studies. By elaborating on the conceptual underpinnings and the practical consequences of those guidelines, I hope to provide some orientation for research situated at the intersection of culture and science. In this way, I also aim to undercut some of the methodological criticism directed at this exciting interdisciplinary field of study.

Human Vocality Outside Music and Language: an Attempt to Bridge the Gap between Cognitive Science and Culture Theory

Viivian JÕEMETS (University of Tartu)

Over some recent years various disciplines, each from and within their proper area of competence, have arrived at the same point of understanding that vocal expression is a fundamental

psychological as well as physiological need for human beings. That pleasant sounds have a soothing effect on our psychic state has been well known and put into use for thousands of years of human existence. That primates and other animals also do the same is, for Western theoretical thought, a discovery of the 20th century. And that vocal sounds produce certain traceable effects in the human brain as well as in other parts of the human body has been the topic of research of a few last decades.

Laboratory tasks and MRI research have recently given us much information about human voice production and processing with or without language or music in controlled environment stripped from any unwanted background variables such as culture or personal history. And yet laboratory situations are a far cry from real-life cognitive processes where motivation and meaning form the integral part of a vocal act. Voice in a contextual void is an impossibility as for a vocal sound to emerge there is always an urge to express. We shall look at some laboratory experiments on human voice and ask how and to what extent theory might rely on these findings and, on the other hand, how a theoretical study that analyses voice usage in a natural setting could propose new paths for experimental research that today cannot take into account cultural aspects or contextual variables.

Should we care about the Bayesian Revolution? Probability and Predictability in Cognitive Literary Studies

Karin KUKKONEN (University of Turku)

Bayesian probability calculus has made its mark on every conceivable area of the cognitive sciences, ranging from perception (Knill and Richards 1996), goal-directed actions (Friston 2012), categorization (Tenenbaum et al. 2011), causal reasoning (Schulz and Gopnik 2004), language acquisition (Saffran, Senghas, and Trueswell 2001) to reading simple texts (Norris 2006). Dubbed “la révolution Bayésienne”, the Bayesian revolution, by Stanislas Dehaene, this rise of the Bayesian approaches has directed attention in the cognitive sciences to the uncertain, contingent and provisional aspects of our minds and bodies making sense of the world.

In this presentation, I shall explore what perspectives the Bayesian revolution might offer to cognitive literary study. Two aspects in particular will stand in the centre of my discussion: First, the Bayesian probability calculus at work when readers engage with the environment of the fictional world (see Kukkonen forthcoming) and, second, the predictive-coding model in embodied cognition (Friston 2012), which promises to reconcile immersive "presence" with the temporal dynamics of plot. When compared with more traditional cognitive approaches, such as frame theory (Jahn 1997) and schemata and scripts (Herman 2002; Emmott 1997), Bayesian probability calculus seems to offer a more flexible and adjustable perspective. However, from the perspective of the cognitive sciences, the Bayesian probability calculus has as its goal a firm predictive grasp of the world, which eventually does not need to be updated and developed any more, whereas literary narrative strives for surprises and defamiliarisations. Does this drive to predictability make the Bayesian approaches unsuitable for cognitive literary study? Should we rather concentrate on the cognitive biases that work against Bayesian probability calculus (Kahneman and Tversky 1992)? My presentation cannot provide final answers to these questions, but it will relate Bayesian perspectives to earlier cognitive approaches, as well as explore their applicability to the crafted texts of literature.

A Cognitivist Take on Ekphrasis: Poetic Variations on “Vincent’s Bedroom in Arles”

Alina KWIATKOWSKA (University of Lodz, Poland)

The most general purpose of my paper is to point out the potential of the cognitivist approach for bridging the gap between the analysis of verbal and visual images. For the first time ever, the researchers in both fields can meet on a common ground: that of the laws and mechanisms of perception, cognition, and mental construal, which determine the form of both visual and verbal realizations.

Employing some concepts of cognitive linguistics/poetics, I would like to tackle the subject of ekphrasis, focusing on several poems inspired by the well-known painting by Vincent Van Gogh. This particular painting is interesting as an object of cognitive intermedial study because we have access to its description by the artist himself, who wrote about it in substantial detail in his letters to his brother. This matter-of-fact description by an engaged observer, who was looking at the real scene when producing its representation, will serve as the point of departure for my discussion of the ekphrastic poems, whose authors react to the painting in very different ways, distancing themselves from it in a lesser or greater degree, sometimes going off at a tangent from its content.

Pascal Quignard’s Writing: from the Words to the Brain

Maria Concetta LA ROCCA (University of Catania)

Nowadays cognitive sciences (Neuro-aesthetics in particular) have made significant progress in the study of the relationships between body and mind, in order to finally consider literature in its biological aspects. Indeed, there are deep connections between the aesthetic experience and its effects on our brain (i.e. “emotions”). We intend to explore, in our work, the French contemporary writer Pascal Quignard’s production since it unifies writing, music, painting and dance in a high emotional experience. Concerning his writing, we will analyse the presence of the metaphors and of other figures of speech (i. e. repetition, metonymy, pauses and anaphora) because they are considered as important rhetorical means, capable to arouse emotions in the reader. So, we will refer either to the works of Iacoboni, Gallese or Miall, or to the experiment conducted by Sathian which shows that certain areas of our brain (parietal operculum) are stimulated while reading, for example, the metaphors. Moreover, being himself a musician, Quignard writes as if he was a composer. Every word and sentence has a special musicality which captivates the reader’s attention and emotions. We will also examine how Quignard makes extensive use of images of pain and loss, either evocating them through words or to put them directly onto the pages (primitive images and contemporary painting) to support his ontological discourses. Thanks to the mirror neurons (Rizzolatti), the reader feels himself empathically involved. Quignard unifies literature and dance, thus giving the reader a somo-aesthetic experience, so we will show how important the movement is in creating emotions. All these investigations have significant implications in studying literature, and in particular that of Quignard, mainly in its biological implications, thus paying attention to the neurological processes in the human body.

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From Neanderthal Man to Homo Sapiens: Making Signs as a Crucial Stage in Human Evolution

Jessica MURANO (University of Insubria, Varese, Italy)

The figurative phenomenon in the Upper Paleolithic era opens up several questions concerning both art and cognition. In particular, there are two dominant theories: one claims that art is a co-product of mental evolution, therefore implementation of cognitive functions corresponded to the emergence of the figurative phenomenon (Tattersal 2012), while the other states that art was an integral part of the process of self-design which allowed self-organization of the mind in its modern version (Consoli, 2013).

Neanderthal man's graphics is the first demonstration of the ability to transfer mental images on a material support, yet representing only lines and not recognizable subjects. The making of signs by Homo Sapiens is to a certain extent variable in the technique and in the subject matter, thus implying the occurrence of a real non-verbal, systematic and codified language. Thus, the attitude of Homo Sapiens suggests the ability not only to receive an information, but also to handle it down through an image. We conclude that Homo Sapiens acquired the ability to have symbolic attitude and varied communication, possibly corresponding to the occurrence of an organized mental life and to structure and coordinate thoughts and actions.

Using such two example of making signs as a reference comparison, I will try to show how, through representation/depiction, art stimulated complex forms of mind reading, how it became a collective phenomenon and how it facilitated the transition from minimal self experience and thoughts, as the pre-reflective point of the origin of actions, to the narrative self, in terms of changeable and dynamic self-image.

Post-modern Writing Techniques as Conceptual Metaphors of Embodied Understanding

Peter OSTERRIED (Bochum)

The cognitive turn initiated a new approach to the nature of literary metaphors, too. They are no more seen as ornaments in Cartesian tradition for they cannot be translated into abstract concepts without any semantic change. Instead, literary metaphors work like subconscious accesses to the embodied understanding of other, fictitious lives and hence have us reflect on our own.

But what about post-modern fiction deliberately using alienating narrative techniques, which, at a first glance, must simply ask the reader to call spontaneous embodied understanding into question? By two literary examples, I shall argue that this is not generally true.

Michael Cunningham's short story "Mister Brother" (1999), mainly based on the provocative usage of a second-person narrator, and Colum McCann's pseudo-biographic novel *Dancer* (2003), inspired by the life of Rudolf Nureyev and structured in the form of a web-like montage, provide the possibility of embodied understanding just because of the challenge of allegedly confusing post-modern writing strategies. Contemporary readers might admittedly be lost in such complicated reading processes, but this only at the beginning of their reading process. Sooner rather than later, they will dive into the mosaic fascination of unfathomable life.

Thus, I shall point out that alienating structural devices such as the ones above become, in the two works, much more than means for leading the reader astray but that they function like conceptual metaphors for making contemporary mental life more palpable: And who might finally say whether we are seduced by the new glasses or rather by the phenomena we can see through them?

Crowds in Nineteenth-century Fiction and History

Alan PALMER (Weardale)

Although the traditional literary-studies approach to the construction of fictional minds is an internalist one that stresses those aspects that are inner, passive, introspective, and individual, an externalist perspective is required as well, one that stresses the public, social, concrete, and located aspects of mental life in the novel. The existence of *social mind* in novels is revealed through the externalist perspective.

An important part of the social mind is our capacity for *intermental thought*. Such thinking is joint, group, shared, or collective, as opposed to intramental, or individual, or private thought. It is also known as *socially distributed, situated or extended cognition*, and also, especially in literary studies, as *intersubjectivity*. Intermental thought is a crucially important component of fictional narrative because, just as in real life, where much of our thinking is done in groups, much of the mental functioning that occurs in novels is done by large organizations, small groups, work colleagues, friends, families, couples, and other intermental units. I would argue, in fact, that groups of characters can form what I call *intermental minds*. These are intermental units that are so well defined, stable and long lasting, and where so much successful intermental thought takes place that they can plausibly be considered as group minds. Couples who have been together for a long time, who know each other's minds well, and who are able to

work well together on such joint activities as decision making and problem solving are one good example.

The purpose of my talk is to consider *social minds* in both fiction and non-fiction. The conceptual tools that I have developed for fictional narrative appear, for example, to be equally applicable to historical narrative. I'll be considering examples of social minds in third-person fictional and non-fictional texts from the nineteenth century. Specifically, I'll be looking at the behaviour of *crowds* in two novels (Walter Scott's *The Heart of Mid-Lothian* and Charles Dickens's novel *Barnaby Rudge*), and a history - Thomas Macaulay's *History of England*. I decided to find examples that were published roughly at the same sort of time, covered a similar sort of time period and had a certain amount of overlap in content. For example, the passages that I'll be considering in the fictional texts are based on real events and Macaulay's approach to history is rather novelistic.

I will consider the presentation of large groups of people in these texts in terms of the key notions of agency, moral responsibility, organisation, action and communication. The talk will also examine the relationships between individuals and groups and also between the subgroups that form within large crowds. The concept of *agency* is of great importance. The language used in these texts frequently raises the question of the extent to which group actions are consciously willed, and, therefore, how much agency is involved on the part of the individuals comprising the crowd. The reader of each text is invited to ask whether the primary responsibility for group actions lies with a leader, or with a small group that may be manipulating the crowd or with the crowd as a whole.

While analysing these issues, I will look at the similarities and differences between the group fictional minds described in the two novels, and the group factual mind described by Macaulay.

Social – Emotional – Rational Brain-Minds: A Challenge to Cultural Understandings of (Intersected and Gendered) Norms

Sigrid SCHMITZ (University of Vienna)

Feminist epistemologies and queer discourses have been questioning and deconstructing the binary opposition between nature and culture and the impacts of categorical framings on culture, society, and science for many years. Especially poststructuralist theories criticize the naturalization of the construction of binary genders, intersected with categories like ethnicity, class or sexuality, and their normalizing and legitimizing function in social discourse. The body-mind problem has recently been addressed (again) with neo-materialist approaches in feminist and broader debates. Such accounts aim for a re-consideration of corporealities entangled indivisibly in socio-cultural situatedness and meaning-making processes. One key question of feminist materialism approaches is: How can we address nature and matter as dynamic components within material-semiotic networks, without reaffirming and legitimizing naturalizing power dynamics.

In this talk I elaborate contemporary approaches to 'naturecultures' with a particular focus on the "social brain-mind" debate. Popular discourses around the financial crisis have brought new facets of gendered emotionality and rationality in into light that refer to neurocognitive knowledge production (in terms of current neurocultures). The impacts and mutual enactments of these recent findings in various socio-neuro-cognitive fields of research are to be analyzed on the

level of individuals (i.e. their identities, interactions, in- and exclusions), on the level of society (i.e. structures & institutions) and on the level of symbolic cultural order (norms and legitimization).

The Persistence of Cognition, or How to Paint a Thought

Peter SCHNECK (Osnabrück University)

In her *Introduction to Cognitive Cultural Studies* (2010), Lisa Zunshine has argued that "cognitive evolutionary psychology and cultural historicism engage with the same problem [...] both fields want to know why and how bodies perform minds." I want to critically discuss some of the

central implications of Zunshine's argument by looking particularly at the 'performance of minds' in 19th-century American painting. The major question will be in what way the potential convergence of cognitivist and historicist approaches in cultural studies may in fact be understood and, more importantly, may be made useful for the critical study of culture. The particular challenge of visual art to such a potential convergence of critical perspectives is due to the fact that painting may offer itself to rather different, even conflicting venues of interpretation in terms of embodied cognition. This must become most obvious once we drop the distinction between figurative ('mimetic') and abstract ('non-mimetic') modes of painting to rather consider their similarities as 'performative' modes of cognition. Moreover, any painting understood as a performative mode of cognition addresses (even demands) a response by its beholders that also implies a performance, or rather a performative complement to the cognition visualized through, and embodied in, the painting. What Ernst Gombrich called the "beholder's share" in the reception of visual art thus not only relies on our natural tendencies in perceiving and (re-) constructing visual experience, but also on our cultural skills to engage in visual experience by 'performing' specific modes of embodied cognition.

Russian Poems on the Stalin's Terror and the Gulag Experiences as Timeless Cognitive Models

Alexandra SMITH (University of Edinburgh)

The publication of many works related to the Gulag experiences in the last 25 years triggered numerous discussions about the necessity of the development of a special conceptual framework for interpreting such texts in an adequate manner. While some scholars focus on the generic peculiarities of the memoirs and the fictional literature related to the Soviet Gulag (Leona Toker, 2001) or on the specifics of the gender representation (Benjamin Sutcliffe, 2003), other critics (including Elena Mikhailik, 2009) suggest that the established mode of reading such texts as historical documents and witnesses' accounts undermines both the aesthetic value of the Gulag literature and its ability to engage the reader in the process of commemoration and of the construction of the truthful account of the past.

Mikhail Gronas's recently published book *Cognitive Poetics and Cultural Memory: Russian Literary Mnemonics* (2011) offers a new approach to reading Russian poetic texts about

Stalin's terror as well as to the role of poetry in the preservation of human dignity and of mental activities during the periods of distress and terror. The present paper will develop Gronas' approach further. It will discuss the strategies that enabled such well-known authors as Anna Akhmatova and Varlam Shalamov to engage with and subvert several conceptual metaphors associated with the notions of suffering and of Christian martyrdom that were traditionally popular in Russian culture. It will be argued that they depart from the tradition of sanctification of Russian writers and focus instead on the construction of the universal language of trauma associated with somatic responses to it. They use major narratives of the past (including Biblical stories) as timeless cognitive models by which the reader could make sense of the world and of human activities in it. The Paper will argue that the use of cognitive approaches for the interpretation of the Gulag Literature will shed a new light on the role of many unofficial poets in the preservation of cultural memory through their texts and will provide a stepping stone for comparative studies related to the genre of prison writing per se, especially because trauma writing facilitates the construction of meaning (Park and Bloomberg, 2002). It would also help to integrate the Gulag into Western histories of traumatic memories.

Form Does Not Follow Function: the Sonnet and a Cognitive Poetics of Form

Felix SPRANG (Hamburg University)

When we think of cognitive sciences and culture we usually think of bringing expertise from neuroscience to literary texts. However, as pointed out by Raymond Tallis as early as 2008 ("The Neuroscience Delusion, *Times Literary Supplement*), we should be careful not to fall for a reductionist perspective on literary production. In my paper I would like to stress the opportunities that come with a focus on aesthetics and poetic form, following Stockwell (2009) who has argued that we need to go beyond semantics in the field of cognitive poetics. Experiments using eye trackers and MRI scanners have shown that readers' brains 'fire up' holistically when reading poetry (Jacobs 2011), so one task of cognitive poetics is to look more closely at the aesthetic experience of literary texts. Following Helen Vendler's observation (1997: 168) that Shakespeare's sonnets reflect "the fluidity of mental processes (exemplified in lexical and syntactic concatenation)", I will discuss cognitive approaches to the sonnet form. According to Raphael Lyne, Shakespeare's *Sonnets* are an "ideal place" to investigate "thinking in a cognitive rhetoric." (2011: 198) Rhetoric and logic inform and form the sonnet; they provide cognitive patterns for engaging with the poem and thus shape its meaning. In a dynamic process, then, form resonates with cognitive skills rooted in rhetoric and logic. If we accept that poetic form is not given but evolves while stimuli for cognitive processes and emotional responses are provided, research in cognitive poetics must take aspects of form more seriously. In my paper I will outline the experimental and theoretical framework for the investigation of poetic form.

Discussing Literature and Aesthetic Conventions in a Cognitive Framework: Two Approaches

Bartosz STOPEL (University of Silesia, Poland)

In my paper I would like to have a closer look at the relation between cognitive theories of art, especially literature, and contemporary philosophy of art. Given the recent growth of interest in conducting cognitive science-based research on arts, it is surprising that so little attention has been paid to exploring the relation between the two. I will limit my discussion of philosophy to analytic aesthetics, as most continental literary aesthetics (literary theory) has been chiefly preoccupied with studying the ideological, cultural or textual dimension of literature, questioning its artistic character as such.

One potential problem for explaining literature in a cognitive framework is the fact that contemporary aesthetics is dominated by institutional (Lamarque, Olsen) and historical (Levinson) definitions of art, both of which stress the conventionalist, art-world theory-based nature of art. If what accounts for literariness, value, and aesthetic pleasure is entirely a matter of institutionally determined convention, and at the same time, the whole process of aesthetic reading, understanding, and appreciating is an arbitrary rule-governed procedure, then giving a successful explanation of the functioning of art in a cognitive framework is seriously challenged.

I would like to demonstrate two ways in which cognitive science-based research of literature, and thus, art as such, can take up this challenge. The first one, which I will attempt to prove as being unsuccessful, is the reductive approach which offers a fully naturalist explanation of art, typical of those cognitive science inspired scholars that rely heavily on evolutionary psychology: the literary darwinists (Carroll). Instead of simply reducing art, with all the practices and institutions it incorporates, I will outline another approach, which I consider more successful, and which attempts to show how the institutions and conventions that regulate the aesthetic consumption of literature might be said to emerge out of untutored, “natural” responses to literature. Such approach acknowledges the importance of the non-reductive aspects of the art-world: its locality and historicity and, at the same time, it is congruent with the fundamental contention of cognitive scientists, namely, that “there is no difference in kind between the practices of literature and ordinary thought processes.” (Hogan). The details of my discussion will include references to debates concerning the nature of convention (Baxter), aesthetic attitude (Dickie), and some examples of empirical research of literary response (Miall).

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Kinds of Minds and How to Explain Them: What Model(s) of the Human Mind do we Need for Explaining Linguistic Change?

Nikolaus RITT (University of Vienna)

Systems to which we attribute cognitive capacities are capable of interacting with their environment in ways that we consider purposeful and goal directed. When we study these capacities, our goal is normally to understand the principles and mechanisms that are at work in them, so that we can predict and deal with the behaviour of the systems we are confronting.

Obviously, cognitive systems in that wide sense can vary vastly in terms of their complexity, sophistication, and predictability. On one end of the scale are simple mechanical devices such as thermostats or clocks, somewhere in the middle are modern computers, plants, and animals, and at the other end of the scale, we find humans and animals similar to humans. Whether that scale of cognitive complexity or capacity has an objective basis, or whether it represents a construct of our specific human perspective may be an open question, but what is undeniable is that the approaches we take when we try to understand cognitive systems often depend on where we place them on that scale. Thus, very simple systems such as thermostats can be understood – very well – in physical, purely mechanical terms by taking what Dennett (e.g. 1989) refers to as the ‘physical stance’. More complex systems, such as clocks, or computers, for example, are normally explained in terms of their functional ‘design’ (*ibid.*), i.e. in terms of the functions that their components fulfil and in terms of the interaction of these components. In such cases, we can afford to ignore physical details. Finally, when we confront the most complex cognitive systems that are known to us, that is to say ourselves, we usually apply the ‘intentional stance’ (*ibid.*), i.e. we assume the systems to be driven by intentional agents that have goals, that know their environment, and that are capable of pursuing their goals on the basis of what they know.

Crucially, the different explanatory stances that we may take towards any of those systems are not mutually exclusive in principle. We can think, in principle, of thermostats as intentional agents whose sole desire is to make us feel comfortable in our living rooms, and we can think, in principle, of humans as complex robots designed out of DNA and proteins for the purpose of feeling good and reproducing. Nevertheless, we tend to regard some stances as more natural in some cases, and others in others: explaining the behaviour of thermostats or even animals in intentional terms is often regarded as anthropomorphism, while attempts to explain human behaviour in terms of biological design (whether neuro-physical or genetic) are often regarded as metaphorical (Lass 2003, Andersen 2006), greedily reductionist or biologically essentialist (Cameron 2010).

In contemporary historical linguistics, our natural inclination to conceive of human behaviour primarily in intentional terms, has tended to solidify into the axiom that language change can be properly understood only from the perspective of speakers and their communicative intentions (Traugott & Nevalainen 2011). Looking at a number of phonological, morpho-syntactic and phonological changes, my contribution will question that axiom, and propose that even accounts of human behaviour can be unduly anthropomorphic. Instead, I will argue that there are many aspects of human behaviour which are more satisfactorily accounted for in terms of the biological design of speakers rather than in terms of their intentions.

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The Gendered Eye – A Content Related Gender Bias in Art Perception

Mario Tadzio THALWITZER (University of Vienna)

How does the constitution of gender within the field of vision affect differences and similarities in the perception of art and how could such effects be measured? Specific deviation can be determined through the means of empirical methods. Empirical research concerned with gender differences is often based on the assumption that biological divergence is the cause of cognitive differences (e.g. Moss et al. 2012). In the Humanities though constructivist theories on gender differences are dominating. In addition to social or natural sciences they provide a distinct but fascinating theoretical starting point for cognitive research.

Feminist art history assumes that women are typecast in the role of the passive object of representation, they literally become the image (Eiblmayr 1993), while men are addressed as active beholders. Gender differences in art perception are therefore to be expected due to different taboos and identification in respect to the content of works of art. Classic art historical tools guide the selection of the stimuli and the discussion of the gender-content relation. An eye tracking study is measuring gaze movements and fixations to give physical evidence of gender related differences. Interviews are conducted, concerned with interdependent categories. The talk will give a deeper insight in the theoretical groundwork, the original hypothesis and present first findings of the studies.

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Yellow Fever – How a Cultural Model Organizes the American Discourse about Caucasian-Asian Romantic Relations

Paul THIERBACH (Osnabrück University)

The Yellow Fever I will be talking about is not the acute viral hemorrhagic disease but a popular metaphorical conceptualization of the processes leading to the comparatively high frequency of Caucasian-male/Asian-female interracial romantic relationships in the U.S. The concept is not part of a theoretical system but heavily informed by feminist and postcolonialist traditions and might have been invoked first by Chinese American playwright David Henry Hwang in the postscript to his screenplay *M. Butterfly* in 1986. Inspired by Zoltán Kövecses' refinement of Lakoff & Johnson's CMT, I understand Yellow Fever as a multilayered 'cultural model', a conceptual structure that is simultaneously cultural and cognitive since it is a culturally specific mental representation of aspects of the world. Deconstructing and exploring the complexities of Yellow Fever reveals its connections to Euro-American colonial discourses, the history of Asian America, fears of Communist infiltration as well as the development of a social epidemiology. It creates an image of the world in which right and wrong are easily identifiable as it incorporates moralizing narrative structures and combines conceptual metaphors revolving around spiritual purity/healthy bodies, sin/dirt, viral disease and zombification with racial color symbolism. I will present a cultural analysis of Yellow Fever that is to demonstrate what the concept brings to light and what it leaves in the dark, what it magnifies and what it diminishes. To that end, I will engage with postcolonial theory in the form of Sheridan Prasso's book-length study *The Asian Mystique*, an important follow-up to Edward Said's *Orientalism*.

“And Never Called Me Mother!”: A Cognitive Poetics Approach to Victorian Parenting Magazines and Sensation Fiction

Tamara Silvia WAGNER (Nanyang Technological University, Singapore)

Parenting advice is a booming industry and probably one of the most contested discourses. Often considered a particularly contemporary problem, it has its roots as much in the nineteenth-century publishing industry as in Victorian cults of domesticity, mothering, and childhood. Consumer culture, self-help manuals (themselves a peculiarly Victorian invention), and a craze for sensation centrally informed the first mass-market publications on parenting. The mid-nineteenth century saw a proliferation of magazines, pamphlets, and manuals on the physical, moral, and intellectual education of infants and young children, as well as reflections on current theories in popular fiction. If the magazines drew on sensational narrative strategies to hammer home their underpinning ideologies, popular Victorian sensation fiction deployed the format of newspaper reports to add an element of authenticity. They borrowed from, or deliberately set out to contradict, advice material, and used emotionally harrowing scenes to illustrate the effects of “bad” parenting practices. Taking the sensation writer Mrs Henry (Ellen) Wood as an example, this paper examines how such strategies worked and what this can tell us about the use of affectively charged terms and readers’ responses in the representation of parenting more generally. Notorious for her representation of a divorced mother who works under a false identity as her own children’s governess, but remains unrecognised by her dying son – he “never called me mother,” an exclamation Victorian stage writers widely popularised – in *East Lynne* (1861), Wood began her career with the temperance novel *Danesbury House* (1860), which exposes the dangers of alcoholism through a harrowing depiction of a child’s accidental death. Wood was to use accidental poisoning of children by dangerous household substances throughout her fiction, blurring the lines between didacticism and sheer sensationalisation.