THE 4TH ANKARA LITERATURE CONFERENCE FOR GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

"Places and Spaces"

BOOK of ABSTRACTS

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Special thanks to…

Opening Remark

Dear Participants and Esteemed Academics,

It is a true pleasure to welcome you all to The Fourth Ankara Literature Conference. Standing here today, I feel both honored and inspired—honored to be part of an event that fosters intellectual growth and inspired by the collective passion for literature that brings us all together.

At TED University's Department of English Language and Literature, we aim to give our students a broad and insightful perspective, staying true to our vision and mission. Beyond teaching literary genres, theories, and concepts, we encourage to explore literature as a living, evolving space—one that connects different ideas, sparks critical thinking, and opens doors to new perspectives. We believe literature is more than just an academic field; it's an experience. Through our courses, events, and discussions, we create opportunities for engagement and intellectual growth. Conferences like this one remind us how literature shapes both our studies and the way we see the world.

Standing here today, being part of this shared intellectual journey, is truly exhilarating. It is a privilege to engage in an exchange of ideas, to approach literary spaces and places from multiple viewpoints, and to explore the vast landscapes that literature opens up for us. This conference presents us with a remarkable opportunity to come together, to reflect, to challenge our perceptions, and ultimately, to expand our understanding of the literary world.

Each year, this union has been a space for discussion, discovery, and transformation. But beyond the academic discourse, it is also a meeting place—a point of convergence where ideas, perspectives, and voices from different backgrounds merge into a shared experience. And that, in itself, is a powerful testament to this year's subject: "Places and Spaces."

Looking Back

Before we dive into this year's theme, let's take a moment to acknowledge how far we've come. Each of our previous conferences has been a steppingstone, guiding us deeper into the world of literature.

In 2022, we embraced the theme "Back to the Roots." This theme was not merely a reflection on the past; it was an acknowledgment of the academic foundations that have shaped our field in Turkey. The Faculty of Language, History, and Geography (DTCF) is home to one of the country's earliest English Language and Literature departments, while TED Ankara College holds the distinction of being the first Turkish institution to offer foreign language education.

Consequently, the theme of the inaugural conference highlighted the historical significance of both institutions and their enduring collaboration.

Then, in 2023, we turned inward with "Writing as a Path to Discovery." We reflected on how writing is not just an act of composition but an act of self-exploration. Writers do not merely create stories; they uncover truths—about themselves, about society, about the places they inhabit.

Last year, in 2024, we expanded our perspective with "Intercultural Encounters." Literature has always been a bridge between cultures, a space where different histories, languages, and identities intersect. We explored how stories travel across borders, how they transform when they enter new contexts, and how they create dialogues between the familiar and the foreign.

And now, in 2025, we arrive at "Places and Spaces." This theme feels like a natural evolution of our journey—a way to bring together everything we've explored before. Because what is literature if not a space? A space for memory, for identity, for possibility?

The Power of Place in Literature

Think about the most memorable books you've read. Chances are, the places within them left a deep imprint on you. Maybe it was the fog-drenched streets of Victorian London in a Dickens novel. Or the vast, lonely landscapes of a Hemingway story. Or even the single, suffocating room in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper." Places in literature are not just backdrops; they shape the very fabric of the narrative.

Consider how literature transforms physical locations into something more. James Joyce's Dublin is not just a city—it is a psychological and emotional map of his characters. But let's go beyond the written word. Even in our own lives, places hold meaning beyond their physicality. Have you ever returned to a childhood home and felt it shrink in size, as if the space itself had changed? Literature captures this feeling—this interplay between real and imagined spaces—and turns it into something profound.

Literature as Space

While literature often takes us to physical locations, it also constructs abstract spaces—mental, emotional, and ideological. The space between the lines of a poem, the silence in a well-placed ellipsis, the vastness of an unfinished thought—these are spaces that invite interpretation, spaces where meaning is negotiated.

And what about the act of reading itself? When we read, we enter a space that exists between the writer's words and our own experiences. No two readers inhabit the same literary space in quite the same way. This is why a novel can feel like a different book each time we return to it—because the space we bring to it, the context we occupy, has shifted.

The Space We Create Here

This conference, too, is a space. It is a place where ideas take shape, where discussions unfold, where we push boundaries and challenge perspectives. And just as literature transforms spaces into places filled with meaning, so too do we transform this gathering into something more than an academic event.

So, I invite you all—whether you are here to present, to listen, or simply to engage—to make the most of this space. Ask questions. Share your thoughts. Challenge assumptions…And while doing all this, let's be kind and understanding, creating an environment where every idea is valued, and every perspective is heard. Let this conference not just be a place you attended, but a space you inhabited fully

A Final Thought If there is one thing literature teaches us, it is that places are never just places, and spaces are never empty. They are filled—with memory, with identity, with history, with possibility. As we navigate this theme together, let us remember that the spaces we create, both in literature and in life, shape the way we see the world. And, in turn, the way the world sees us.

In this spirit, it is especially meaningful that we are gathered here today, in institutions that hold deep historical and academic significance. The Faculty of Language, History, and Geography (DTCF) and the buildings of Ankara University stand as a testament to Atatürk's vision for higher education, serving as one of the first faculties established by his directive. Similarly, TED University carries the legacy of TED, an institution founded upon his guidance, with its campus buildings holding historical and cultural value. Today, these two distinguished institutions come together under one roof, united by a shared commitment to academic inquiry and intellectual exchange.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Ankara University, the organizing committee, and all of you for being here today. As members of TED University's English Language and Literature department, we are proud to contribute to this ever-growing intellectual community.

I look forward to the discussions and insights that will emerge over the course of this conference. May we all leave here not just with new knowledge, but with new ways of seeing, feeling, and inhabiting the places and spaces of our world.

Thank you.

Şevval Aparı,

Department of English Language and Literature,

TEDU University (M.A. cand.)

PRESENTATIONS by UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

Anarchist Utopias and Feminist Spaces: Gender and Authority in Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*

Aybüke Erbaş

Hacettepe University

The Dispossessed (1974) by Ursula K. Le Guin is grounded in two contrasting worlds: Anarres, where the main character Shevek starts his journey, is an anarchist society aiming for equality with no government and no free market, while Urras depicts a capitalist society characterized by wealth, inequality, and oppression. The story begins with Shevek's adventure as a physicist who tries to develop a unifying theoretical framework for faster-than-light communication. As he continues searching for this invitation called the Principle of Simultaneity, he experiences both societies and encounters many struggles while attempting to reconcile their ideological and cultural differences. This paper examines how authority manifests itself repeatedly within the anarchist society of Anarres in Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*, concentrating principally on the experience and resistance of women, with references to Emma Goldman's anarchist feminist philosophy. Goldman argues that revolution must expand to individual freedoms and autonomy and must include the demolition of gender hierarchies at the personal and familial levels. Insights into the complexities of utopian and revolutionary ideologies are offered in this study, highlighting the importance of feminist perspectives in understanding how power behaves in supposedly liberated communities. The paper argues that patriarchy, while absent in name, functions at the cultural and institutional levels in

egalitarian societies, positioning *The Dispossessed* as a critique of both revolutionary ideals and the difficulties of achieving true equality and freedom.

Biography

Aybüke Erbaş is a senior undergraduate student in the Department of American Culture and Literature at Hacettepe University. Her academic interests encompass American history, gender studies, and American ethnic studies, along with a focus on science fiction and fantasy literature.

The Role of the Forest in A *Midsummer Night's Dream*

Aysu Ayıntap

TED University

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the forest is a transformative space where characters experience freedom, unpredictability, and profound change. The forest contrasts sharply with Athens, a city governed by rigid laws and strict social hierarchies. When the lovers—Hermia, Lysander, Helena, and Demetrius—enter the forest, they escape the constraints of civilization and enter a liminal space between the known and the unknown. In this untamed environment, the characters are able to live their emotions and desires without the restrictions set by Athenian societal norms. However, they also have to face the unpredictable forces of magic and nature. Chaos breaks out when misunderstandings and Puck's magic, especially through his love potion, mix up relationships and emotions. But amid the confusion, the forest becomes a space for self-discovery and resolution. By the time the lovers leave the forest, they have undergone significant personal and relational transformations. Their tumultuous emotions are resolved, and their connections grow stronger and more defined. The forest helps them grow in ways that would not be possible in the strict world of Athens. The forest in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* actively shapes the characters' experiences as a transformative setting. It shows how stepping into an unfamiliar place can lead to growth, healing, and clarity. Shakespeare places the characters in a space where the usual rules no longer apply, using the forest to illustrate how unfamiliar and unpredictable spaces can reveal deeper insights into human nature.

Biography: Aysu Ayıntap is a senior student at TED University, majoring in the Department of English Language and Literature. Her research interests include pre-17th-century literature and the exploration of themes such as ambiguity, identity, and social structures within English literature. She is currently working on her graduation project, which investigates the relationship between William Blake's poetry and paintings.

Exploring Space and Place in Jeanette Winterson's *The Passion*: Venice through Feminist and Postmodern Lenses

Azra Musaoğulları and Özlem Kaya
Middle East Technical University

Jeanette Winterson's *The Passion* is a postmodern novel set in Napoleonic France and Venice in the early years of the 19th century. This paper aims to examine the spatial and feminist dimensions of Venice in Jeanette Winterson's *The Passion*, in light of Lefebvre's notion of the "social production of space" and Massey's approach to space, place, and gender. In terms of Lefebvre's triadic model of space—space as "perceived, conceived, and lived"—Venice in the novel emerges as a space shaped by social structures and individual imagination; Massey's theories help illuminate the relational, dynamic, and gendered nature of the city portrayed in the novel. Massey's feminist perspective highlights how the city destabilizes traditional gendered roles and boundaries, especially through the experiences of Villanelle, a Venetian woman with webbed feet who rebels against gender norms. Winterson's use of historiographic metafiction further complicates this spatial framework, combining historical narratives with fantastical elements to dissect fixed notions of history, space, and identity. Postmodern elements, such as fragmented narratives—the novel oscillates between different narrators and timelines instead of following a chronological storyline—and blurred boundaries between reality and fantasy—the novel combines real historical events, such as the Napoleonic Wars, with supernatural elements like Villanelle's webbed feet—further challenge static notions of

space, identity, and history. The paper argues that in *The Passion*, Venice serves as a feminist and postmodern space, projecting the fluidity of gender, power, and historical storytelling, and functions as a site for the characters' individual and collective transformations, intertwining themes of love, betrayal, and metamorphosis while resisting patriarchal and hierarchical structures of space and identity.

Keywords: *The Passion*, postmodernism, space and place, historiographic metafiction, gender, identity

Biography

Azra Musaoğulları and Özlem Kaya are senior students in the Department of Foreign Language Education at Middle East Technical University. Their research interests span all areas of literature, particularly feminist literature, postmodernism in contemporary fiction, postcolonial literature, literary theory, and the intersection of language and culture. They aim to further explore how gender, power, and colonial histories shape literary narratives and identities in their future studies.

Feminist Literary Efforts to Create Spaces for Women

Barış Mahmutoğlu

Hacettepe University

Patriarchal efforts to constrain the female sex into domestic spaces can be traced back to the roots of the ideology itself. This confinement, coupled with the economic disenfranchisement of women under the guise of male economic care, gained more legitimacy during the Victorian Era, with further solidification of the public and private spheres and literary patriarchal discourses such as Coventry Patmore's "Angel in the House." Yet, amidst these heightened efforts to usurp women's roles and rights in English society, many counterforces emerged, such as the Suffragettes, the Female Sentimental Tradition, as well as many independent authors/authoresses who championed female rights. Virginia Woolf was a trailblazer when it comes to advocating economic independence for women; she wrote *A Room of One's Own*, arguing for an autonomous space for women to be creative in, even if it is just a small room. Many literary works of her time echoed her ideas for freedom from male spatial dominance, such as Henrik Ibsen in *A Doll's House*, Charlotte Brontë in *Jane Eyre*, and Kate Chopin in *The Awakening*. In contemporary times, feminist authors transcend the boundaries of physical spaces and point to the possibility of establishing cyberspaces for females, such as Jeanette Winterson in her *The PowerBook*. Thus, the toilsome effort to define the quality and necessity of female-ruled spaces still resonates after centuries, and literature has been utilized as a

medium by many who wish for this awareness. This presentation aims to evaluate the theme of Places & Spaces with a feminist lens and shed light on how chosen authors of both sexes used literature to draw attention to patriarchy-clear female spaces.

Biography

Barış Mahmutoğlu is a fourth-year student in the English Language and Literature Department at Hacettepe University. With a longstanding passion for the English language, he has actively participated in various Erasmus+ and E-Twinning projects. Originally from one of Central Anatolia's prominent science high schools, he chose to pursue English Literary and Cultural studies over medical studies. As a top-scoring student and valedictorian runner-up, he aspires to unite his academic interests with an academic career, while also developing a personal methodology for life appreciation through psychological and philosophical studies.

The Process That Leads to Transporting the Mind

Caner Daşçı

TED University

The places and spaces that literary works are set in have, since the dawn of literature, been crucial to the experiences they aim to convey. Whether it be the island of Calypso in Homer's *The Odyssey* or Dracula's castle in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, the "setting" of a literary work is essential. It can instill fear and anxiety in the reader or lead to a sense of safety and hope. The setting can be cryptic, dangerous, safe, disgusting, or a myriad of other things that all serve a purpose within a literary work. Although the purpose of a given setting may vary, its importance will always remain. It is important to understand that the setting of a literary work is only one of the "places and spaces" that concern said work. For the setting of a work to achieve its intended effect, a transportive experience must first be achieved by the author and their creation. The work must first be able to transport the "mind" of the reader from the space of its reality to the space of the work's reality. In this aspect, the very literary work itself, regardless of its form, is a "space and place" on its own merit. The reader must first be transported into the space and reality of the work, and afterwards the second layer of the space, which is the setting of the work, can attempt to achieve its intended purpose. Thus, it can be said that there are three different "places and spaces" to consider when discussing literary works. The first is the mind of the reader before beginning to experience the work; then there is the literary work itself, a space that our mind must be transported to in order to

experience it; finally, there is the setting, which is a layer of the "space" of the work itself. This presentation aims to display how different authors in various forms of literary works achieve this "transportation" of the mind into the space of their work. By exploring the obstacles and solutions that creators devise to achieve this transportation of the mind, it will be possible to understand on a deeper level the important and extremely complicated process of literary creation in its various forms.

Keywords: Transportation, physical, process, creation, layer

Biography

Caner Daşçı is a fourth-year undergraduate student at TED University, majoring in English Language and Literature with a double major in sociology. His academic interests lie in adaptation studies and understanding the creative processes behind literary works. He also produces video essays on social media, advocating for accessible academic discourse.

Representation of Fictional Places within Fiction: *Alan Wake* and *Twin Peaks*

Emir Doğukan Çil

Middle East Technical University

In the "seven arts" concept, literature, films, and performance have been considered art forms. TV series, which can be viewed as a sub-medium of films, can also be argued as art forms, but video games have been left out, either purposefully or not, in such discussions. With the rise of the "ludology" field in recent years, there is an argument that video games can be considered art forms, as a combination of literature due to their stories and narratives, films due to their motion visual forms, and performance due to their interactive aspect. Reflections of places in the real world in art have been a common way of making the audience feel more included in the work. However, a direct reference and representation of another fictional place, such as a town inside a fictional work, is much less common. An example of this can be the imaginary town of Bright Falls in Remedy Entertainment's video game series *Alan Wake*, which is an almost one-to-one representation of the town of Twin Peaks from the 1990 TV series of the same title. Both are towns located outside of Washington, containing symmetrical police stations, diners, inns, and more. The focus will be on the co-existing places, concepts, and themes inside these two symmetrical towns, exploring how Sam Lake and Remedy Entertainment's *Alan Wake* took inspiration not only from David Lynch's *Twin Peaks*, but also from other popular culture items. In doing so, the paper will also delve into how the narrative in *Twin Peaks* is presented to the viewer from the director's perspective and how in *Alan Wake*

the player chooses how the narrative will be presented to themselves, making one narrative passive for the viewer and the other active for the player.

Biography

Emir Doğukan Çil is an undergraduate student in the Department of Foreign Language Education at Middle East Technical University. His primary research interests include postmodernism, metafiction, and narratology. Currently, in his senior year, he looks forward to graduating and pursuing further education.

Exploring Artificial Places and the Collapse of Morality in *Westworld*

Eylül Yenigün

Hacettepe University

HBO's *Westworld* is a critically acclaimed science fiction TV series set in a technologically advanced world that explores humanity, morality, artificial intelligence, and unreality through its themes and plotlines. The show takes place in a Wild West-themed Park populated by entities referred to as "hosts." Hosts are robots created to look and act like humans, allowing park guests to immerse themselves completely within the artificial environment of Westworld. They are designed so perfectly that most people cannot tell them apart from real humans. Hosts are created solely for the entertainment of the park-goers, and they are unaware of the realities of their existence as man-made creatures devoid of agency and control over their lives. The park guests of Westworld are free to indulge in their darkest inclinations, often inflicting violence on the unwitting hosts without any concern for the consequences, as the hosts are programmed not to retaliate against any wrongdoings done to them. Within this dynamic, Westworld stops being a theme park and becomes a space where societal constraints and morality cease to exist. This leads to profound questions on the ethics of using sentient beings as mere entertainment, the psychological toll on all who partake in Westworld, and what becomes of humanity if ramifications are no longer a concern. This presentation aims to examine *Westworld* through its depiction of an artificial place populated by posthuman

creations, its critiques of human morality, and humanity's propensity to cause harm when in absolute power and control.

Biography

Eylül Yenigün is a fourth-year undergraduate student in the English Language and Literature department at Hacettepe University. With experience in Model UN as a delegate and committee director, she has participated in two Erasmus+ projects, including one at the University of Porto. Her main academic interests are fantasy, occult representation in media, magic realism, and popular culture.

Exploring the Dehumanizing Effects of the Great Depression in John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* Through Setting

Habibe Çakır

TED University

This research explores how John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* (1937) highlights the dehumanizing effects of the Great Depression and uncovers the unattainability of the American Dream, delving into the exclusion of marginalized characters because of the setting. The devastating effects of the Great Depression are inevitable and cannot be ignored in the text. The novella offers a portrayal of what workers underwent during the late 1930s in California. In the text, the depicted setting causes workers not to be treated as human beings. They are dehumanized and seen as working machines that lack both feelings and thoughts. As a result of this treatment, characters in the novella believe they need to escape from this system and find a better place where they can feel more 'human,' which is associated with the American Dream. Nevertheless, they end up confined in the place where they first started their journey. Although George and Lennie try very hard to escape the system in which they are trapped, they cannot, as the American Dream is merely a dream, as the name itself suggests. Moreover, due to the described setting (a ranch in California), Lennie and Curley's wife, who is the only female character, are excluded from the other characters for different reasons. While Lennie is not accepted by the others because of his mental illness, Curley's wife is not accepted

due to her gender. It should be noted that Curley's wife is the only character whose name is not even mentioned, which could relate to the fact that she is objectified. Indeed, it is known that the events take place in a rural area where being "normal" and "ordinary" is required. Lennie and Curley's wife are excluded from the others as they are not seen as "normal" or "ordinary" human beings.

Biography

Habibe Çakır is a fourth-year undergraduate student in the Department of English Language and Literature at TED University. A passionate writer of short stories, she aims to publish her work in the future. Additionally, she studies acting and is enthusiastic about theatre. Habibe has completed four internships, including in publishing and education, and currently tutors elementary school children in English while intending to pursue a master's degree.

Squid Game: Spaces of Survival and Rebellion in a Capitalist Dystopia

Hufan Qasim Hussein Farah

Ankara University

Netflix's groundbreaking series *Squid Game* (2021-present), directed and written by Hwang Dong-hyuk, delivers a compelling critique of capitalism. Following the story of people suffering from debt in South Korea, pushed to their financial and emotional limits, competing in a deadly game for a substantial cash prize, the series paints a stark picture of poverty, desperation, and the lengths people will go to survive. It urges viewers to reflect on the systemic inequalities that permeate our world. This analysis dives into the spatial dynamics within *Squid Game*, where meticulously crafted arenas become symbols of power and control, standing in sharp contrast to the grim realities of the participants' lives. These spaces capture the socio-economic struggles of those trapped in cycles of financial hardship, fractured relationships, and diminishing dignity. The show's portrayal of gendered spaces uncovers how capitalism deepens systemic inequalities, restricting agency and intensifying oppression. Whether through fleeting alliances or outright defiance, moments of rebellion and solidarity are central to the narrative. They challenge oppressive structures, offering glimpses of resistance in an otherwise brutal system. The seductive promise of wealth, framed as a utopian escape, is undercut by the dystopian violence and exploitation that define the games. These opposing forces highlight the moral failings of systems driven by greed. Liminal and transitional spaces, such as the fragile glass bridge and the bunked dormitory, serve as metaphors for the

instability and precarity of life under capitalism. These settings test participants to their physical and psychological limits, symbolizing financial security's elusive and often illusory nature. Hwang Dong-hyuk's thoughtful storytelling, informed by his reflections on economic despair, brings authenticity and depth to this narrative. Ultimately, *Squid Game* emerges as a profound commentary on the dehumanizing impact of capitalism, illuminating the socio-economic disparities that shape our world and the human cost of enduring such an unforgiving system.

Biography

Hufan Farah is a fourth-year undergraduate student at Ankara University, majoring in American Culture and Literature. She is passionate about language, literature, and cultural studies, focusing on how literature and media reflect societal dynamics, particularly in relation to power and identity. With a background in critical analysis and narrative deconstruction, Hufan aspires to contribute to academia or international relations, emphasizing stories that address inequality.

Don Delillo's *Falling Man* and the Artificially Created Stage for the Collective 9/11 Trauma

Kutluhan Göktürk

Hacettepe University

Don DeLillo's *Falling Man* is one of the well-known 9/11 novels in American literature. The novel displays how New York City became a place of collective trauma after 9/11. DeLillo explores the idea of place and time disruption, illustrating how NYC, one of the world's most progressive cities, froze in time and was captured by the collective trauma. Uncertainty disrupts the lives of New Yorkers and forces them to live in the past; they are in constant fear due to living in a metropolis after a terrorist attack. In the novel, the falling man performer, David, captures the city's collective memory and reflects it through his performance. In that sense, New York City becomes the performative place of David. New York City streets and buildings turn into David's stage, and New Yorkers become the audience against their will. After creating the stage for collective trauma, DeLillo examines the concepts of remembering and forgetting, focusing on how New Yorkers tried to suppress this memory. Due to a loss of order, they created their own spheres to protect themselves. While some New Yorkers create or find spaces that repel the memory (Keith's poker table), others find themselves in places that are created to remember things (Lianne's Alzheimer group). DeLillo uses the disruption of space (in this sense, New York City or the Twin Towers) to study the disruption of identity. Unsafe space and time create uncertain identities, which DeLillo explores through micro-narratives.

Biography

Kutluhan Göktürk is a fourth-year student in the American Culture and Literature department at Hacettepe University. After initially studying comparative literature at Dokuz Eylül University, he returned to pursue his passion for queer and gender studies. He is expected to graduate this spring with a GPA of 3.07.

Spaces of Memory and Trauma in Sara Teasdale's "There Will Come Soft Rains" and "The Long Hill": Collective or Personal Experience?

Melek Aleyna Göktaş

Social Sciences University of Ankara

This study explores how space plays a crucial role in Sara Teasdale's poems "There Will Come Soft Rains" and "The Long Hill," emphasizing how landscapes act as containers for trauma and memory in literary settings. This research delves into the topic of "Places and Spaces," demonstrating how Teasdale's natural and inferred landscapes reflect both individual and collective experiences, providing insights into the complicated relationship that humans have with the literal and figurative places they occupy. In "There Will Come Soft Rains," natural spaces—represented by soft rains, birds, and frogs—depict a peaceful, indifferent world that survives humanity's self-destruction. This rural setting bears silent witness to collective trauma, particularly the devastation of war, while also erasing human memory, emphasizing the conflict between nature's permanence and human fragility. In contrast, in "The Long Hill," the hill serves as a highly personal setting, a repository of memories linked to the speaker's life path. The barren hill represents emotional agony and disillusionment, while fertile valleys symbolize satisfaction and joy, projecting the speaker's inner turmoil onto a natural scene. Teasdale's poems question humanity's transient existence while celebrating nature's enduring force, emphasizing how places become infused with memory and meaning. The study contributes to broader literary and cultural discourses by investigating how places serve as a

bridge between the personal and the collective, the past and the present, and trauma and recovery.

Biography

Melek Aleyna Göktaş is a fourth-year student at Social Sciences University of Ankara, majoring in English Language and Literature. Her academic interests include feminist literary scholarship, gender studies, and psychoanalytic evaluations in modern literature. She has presented research on Sylvia Plath's poetry at academic conferences and is involved in translating articles on contemporary social issues.

"We are the dreamers of the dream": How Imaginary Place Brings Moral Lessons in Roald Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*

Melis Özkan

Ankara University

Roald Dahl is known for his children's books filled with infinite imagination. He penned many novels not only for children but also for adults. In Dahl's famous novel *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, Willy Wonka's magical factory is renowned for its endless production of chocolates and sweets. Finding a golden ticket changes the life of a poor, kind-hearted boy named Charlie Bucket, who lives with his parents and grandparents. Willy Wonka's chocolate factory presents class differences and serves as a critique of capitalism. There are two contrasting spaces in the novel; on one hand, there is the dilapidated house where Charlie lives with his family, and on the other hand, there is the magnificent chocolate factory filled with fantastic productions. Throughout their journey accompanied by Wonka, it is observed that one child is greedy, another is spoiled, and yet another is addicted to technology. Their parents are no different from them; they are simply bad parents. In Roald Dahl's books, the focalizers are generally children. This place, which pushes the boundaries of imagination from edible lands to chocolate rivers, creates opportunities as well as contrasts, such as modesty vs. arrogance and poverty vs. wealth. This space illustrates how modesty brings victory. Dahl's fantastic world is not only an escape from reality but also a reflection of it, imparting moral messages not only to children but also to all of humanity. In this presentation, I will examine how Willy Wonka's factory offers social criticism and moral lessons.

Biography

Melis Özkan is a senior student at Ankara University, majoring in American Culture and Literature. Currently serving as a student office assistant in the Exam Administration Unit, she has completed a certificate in Pedagogical Formation Education. Her interests include American literature, children's fiction, and cultural studies, with aspirations to become an educator.

Physical Space as an Active Participant in *Wuthering Heights*

Merve İnce

Middle East Technical University

The concept of physical space is one of the most critical defining elements of the 19th-century English novel because it reflects the century's political, moral, and social concerns. Place is not only a narrative element but also an important participant in the story. It acts as an agent in the novel by affecting its characters' traits and actions, as exemplified in *Wuthering Heights* (1847). Being the only novel penned by Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* emphasizes its fictional places, which have been the focus of literary studies for decades. While the core differences are the main focus of these studies of physical spaces in *Wuthering Heights*, this study aims to bring a new perspective to place analyses by comparing the novel's two main settings to explore their differences and the effects they have on the characters: Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange, utilizing one of Doreen Massey's theories, the Multiplicity of Space. It is argued that each place has different meanings for each character and has the capacity to affect them. Thus, the novel employs its fictional places as active elements by setting the main events in these two different locations, which have varying effects on the complex characters of the novel. Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange combine gothic and romantic elements, reflecting contemporary Victorian society with this coexistence of opposites: Wuthering Heights emerges as an untamed place with its apparitions, harsh weather conditions, and ancient decorations, while Thrushcross Grange represents Victorian values with its milder weather and civilized, refined characters. It is also argued that as the two

distinct physical places affect the characters, they can help the reader predict the future actions of the characters since they are closely related to the places they inhabit.

Biography

Merve İnce is a senior undergraduate student in the Department of Foreign Language Education at Middle East Technical University. Her main research areas include the 19th-century British novel, Gothic literature, and the concept of space within novels.

Marxist Alienation in an Industrialized Setting in Charles Dickens's *Hard Times*

Mustafa Kutay Gündoğdu

Hacettepe University

The Victorian Era was a time of change for the British Empire, largely due to the Industrial Revolution. With the Industrial Revolution, the majority of the population migrated from rural areas to urbanized cities, hoping to find jobs offering better opportunities. Working in factories became common for workers, as factories paid better wages than their former farming-related jobs. However, being a factory worker has its own complexities, one of which is the exploitation of the workers. Eminent German theoretician Karl Marx, an influential figure in discussions related to communism and capitalism, bases his theories on the conflict between capitalist employers, whose aim is to exploit workers to make more profit, and workers who want to sell their labor at a high price. Starting from this point of view, he put forward many theories, one of which is the alienation of the workers. According to Marx, as a result of capitalistic society, workers become alienated from the product in whose production process they partake, from the process of production, from other workers, and from their potential. In Charles Dickens's novel *Hard Times*, where undertones that criticize capitalistic society are strongly felt, it is possible to see how capitalism affects society, particularly workers, to the point where people lose their personalities. The citizens of Coketown, a fictional industrialized city where factories replaced nature, smoke replaced air, and soot black replaced color, try to lead their lives, whether industrialization affects them positively or negatively. This presentation aims to

examine Marxist alienation through the workers in Hard Times, especially through Stephen Blackpool, who is a worker in an urbanized city setting.

Biography

Mustafa Kutay Gündoğdu is a fourth-year student in the English Language and Literature Department at Hacettepe University, where he is also minoring in Sociology. His research interests encompass British drama, gender studies, translation studies, and Victorian literature.

Navigating the Liminal: Human Struggle and the Resilience against Nature's Presence

Ulaş Doğan

Hacettepe University

Place, as a concept, is one of the most significant elements of a literary narrative, often serving as a crucial agent that shapes characters and their perceptions or forms a base upon which stories are built, including the works of Stephen Crane. In the short story "The Open Boat," Crane tells the story of four shipwreck survivors who attempt to reach the shore, battling the uncaring and indifferent sea and nature's uncompromising force. In their struggles to survive, the men form a bond through shared hardship as they realize they need solidarity against the forces beyond their control. As one of the most important elements of the story, the sea transforms into a liminal space—a transitional or in-between space that symbolizes a threshold—stripping it of its geographical meaning and turning it into a place for existential reckoning. This paper critiques humanity's tendency to impose meaning and control on fundamentally indifferent forces around them and how they project their socially constructed ideals, fears, and hopes onto natural forces such as the sea, believing they can rationalize it. The paper also explores how nature is not just indifferent but actively resists human efforts to conquer or control it. The characters' ever-shifting perceptions of nature (both as a savior and a destroyer) reflect a broader tendency to impose meanings on forces beyond human control.

Biography

Ulaş Doğan is a senior undergraduate student in the Department of American Culture and Literature at Hacettepe University. His academic interests focus on American history, ethnic studies, and the American short story.

L'esprit de la Géographie: The Ethnogeist

Umut Bürme

TOBB University

In the field of literary theory, a myriad of character archetypes have been defined for various reasons, from Baudelaire's Flâneur to Camus' Existential Anti-Hero. Yet, in academia, one specific archetype has gone understudied and left unnamed until now: characters that embody the essence of their land, acting as microcosms of the work's setting and embodying the places, spaces, times, and days that the work takes place in. Characters like Sethe from Morrison's *Beloved* or Leopold Bloom from Joyce's *Ulysses* serve as examples. This paper seeks to address this gap by coining the term "Ethnogeist," defining it as a character whose identity is inherently tied to the cultural, historical, and geographical context of their narrative, embodying the spirit of place in human form. To illustrate this concept, the paper identifies the character of Aleksis Zorba from *Zorba* the Greek by Nikos Kazantzakis as an Ethnogeist and analyzes his relation to wider Greece and the smaller island of Crete through a close reading of the work. Finally, the paper defends the argument that the Ethnogeist is an imperative addition to literary archetypes, serving as a tool for uncovering social commentaries found in fiction. By tracing the interplay between character, places, and spaces, the Ethnogeist archetype allows readers to navigate beyond the narrative, providing a window beyond the illusory gateway of fiction and the reality encoded within.

Keywords: Literary Theory, cultural studies, identity, character archetypes, Greek literature

Biography

Umut Bürme is a senior student in the English Language and Literature Department at TOBB University of Economics and Technology. He has presented on queer theory and narratology at various universities and is currently working on a novella and a philosophical text, aiming to publish in 2026.

An Examination of Catholic Convents as Gendered Spaces in Mary Shelley's "The Bride of Modern Italy"

Yağmur Ateş

Çankaya University

This research examines Mary Shelley's "The Bride of Modern Italy", a lesser-studied but deeply significant work, through the lenses of gender relations, the corruption of Roman Catholicism, and the confinement of young women in Catholic convents in 19th-century Italy. Shelley's personal experiences and observations during her time in Italy inspired her characterization of the protagonist, Clorinda Saviani, a young woman forced into an arranged marriage. These experiences also helped Shelley reveal the realities and dysfunctions of the convents, making her depiction of the Catholic convent representative of both religious corruption and gender-based oppression in Italian society. Through Clorinda's indecisive and unstable attitude towards her love interests and her inability to conform to her religion's teachings, Shelley critiques the institution of marriage and Catholic intervention in Italian society at the time. By situating the short story within its broader socio-cultural framework, this research highlights how Catholic convents functioned as gendered spaces that restricted women's access to the public sphere, a practice Shelley viewed as a tool of patriarchal control and societal conformity. Historical and cultural contexts, including the role of the Roman Catholic Church in shaping gender relations and social norms, are further explored to enhance the reader's understanding of the text. This study aims to highlight Shelley's enduring commitment to exposing gender politics and institutional corruption, as well as her literary contribution to the discourse on gender relations and cultural critique of her period.

Biography

Yağmur Ateş is a senior student in the Department of English Language and Literature at Çankaya University, where she is pursuing a double major in Psychology. She provides private English lessons and serves as the head of her university's Animal Rescue Community. Her experiences in the Erasmus program have sparked her interest in Italian literature, and she aims to explore gender relations in literary contexts through further studies.

Explaining Feminism through Body Horror and Beauty Standards: *The Substance*

Zehra Akyel

Ankara University

In this abstract, my main goal is to examine *The Substance* through feminist film theory, delving into the gendered spaces to explore how *The Substance* critiques patriarchal structures on body image and gender roles. Directed by Coralie Fargeat in 2024*, The Substance* tells the story of a fading celebrity who decides to use a black-market drug, a cell-replicating substance that temporarily creates a younger, better version of herself. By employing body horror as a narrative tool, the film underscores societal pressures on female beauty and the inadequacy women feel about their aging bodies. My paper investigates the depiction of physical, emotional, and metaphorical spaces of control, transformation, and agency in *The Substance*. My analysis positions *The Substance* as a compelling reflection on how beauty norms and pressures compel women to feel inadequate and ugly. Shedding light on how patriarchal beauty norms exploit and commodify women's insecurities, I will also discuss the basics of body horror and its impact on the human psyche, evoking terror about aging and the disturbance of body image.

Biography

Zehra Akyel is a fourth-year undergraduate student at Ankara University, majoring in American Culture and Literature. Her academic interests include cinema, queer studies, and gender studies, particularly in horror genres. Currently writing as a film critic, she has collaborated on short films and aims to pursue higher education in Film and Gender Studies.

PRESENTATIONS by GRADUATE STUDENTS

Of Familiarity and Unfamiliarity: The Gothic-Postmodern Underworld of Margaret Atwood's *The Penelopiad*

Zehra Safa Mangırcıoğlu

Hacettepe University

As a popular way of retelling known stories, rewriting is favored by many contemporary writers, including Margaret Atwood. Best known for her innovative fiction and feminist perspective, the Canadian author's novel *The Penelopia*d (2005) was produced under the scope of the Canongate Myth Series project, which focuses on rewriting mythical stories. In her contribution, Atwood rewrites the Homeric epic *The Odyssey*, formulating the narrative around Penelope's story instead of Odysseus's as a parody. However, the author does not bring the dead to the world of the living but carries the living to the world of the dead. In this sense, she presents readers with an experience of the Underworld of heroes, the neglected, and the murdered while situating the world of the living in an observable historical and geographical distance. Therefore, Atwood manipulates the familiar terror of death by placing the reader inside the unfamiliar territory of the dead. This paper aims to explore the gothic-postmodern space of the Underworld that Atwood presents, giving credit to the maids whose feet have been hanging in the air and have not touched ground for over a millennium.

Keywords: *The Penelopiad*, Margaret Atwood, underworld, gothic-postmodern, parody

Biography

Zehra Safa Mangırcıoğlu is an MA student in the Department of English Language and Literature at Hacettepe University, where she plans to pursue a PhD. Her research explores the theme of otherization in British science fiction, with interests in speculative fiction, adaptation studies, and literary theory.

Reconstructing Place and Space in the Anthropocene: Weird Ecology of Area X in Jeff VanderMeer's *Southern Reach Trilogy*

Şevval Tufan

Hacettepe University

Throughout the ages, science fiction has been an important literary genre that addresses environmental destruction brought about by the Anthropocene era as one of its main themes. This genre questions humanity's place in this epoch by critically analyzing its intricate interactions and connections with their environments and nonhuman agents. In this context, weird fiction, a subgenre of science fiction, serves as a powerful tool for challenging and deconstructing anthropocentric views. Writers in this field often alter familiar places, making them weird and uncanny. Characters who see themselves as superior to the environment suddenly have their superiority challenged by the uncontrollable environment. Jeff VanderMeer's *Southern Reach Trilogy*, consisting of *Annihilation* (2014), *Authority* (2014), and *Acceptance* (2014), critiques the relationship between humans and the environment through an examination of ecological devastation and a focus on nonhuman agency. Within the story, Area X serves as a transitional and liminal place that defies anthropocentric dualisms. By applying critical theories such as Timothy Morton's "Dark Ecology" and Simon C. Estok's "Ecophobia," this presentation will analyze Area X as a weird ecological space that contests traditional ideas of place and space. It will also exemplify how this weird space results in ecophobia and body horror. This analysis will argue that Area X is an important example of ecological weirdness in which space acts as a dynamic and transformative entity. Furthermore, this presentation will contend that VanderMeer critiques ecological destruction while encouraging a rethinking of space in relation to nonhuman agents.

Biography

Şevval Tufan, a graduate of Hacettepe University, is currently pursuing her master's degree in American Culture and Literature. She is writing her thesis on the human/nature binary in Jeff VanderMeer's *Southern Reach Trilogy*. Her academic interests include science fiction, ecofeminism, and animal studies.

Virtual Sanctuaries: Finding Freedom in Digital Dystopias

Şevval Aparı

TED University

In dystopian fiction, digital spaces often emerge as paradoxical realms, offering both refuge and oppression. This paper investigates how virtual worlds function as sanctuaries for individuals escaping oppressive realities while simultaneously reinforcing structures of control. By analyzing Ernest Cline's *Ready Player One* and E.M. Forster's *The Machine Stops*, this study examines the nuanced roles of virtual environments in shaping freedom, identity, and agency. In *Ready Player One*, the OASIS serves as a digital utopia, allowing users to transcend societal decay and redefine their identities through avatars. However, beneath this facade lies a dystopian undercurrent, where corporate monopolies commodify freedom, and inequality mirrors the outside world. Conversely, *The Machine Stops* presents a world where humans retreat entirely into virtuality, relying on the "Machine" for survival. This dependency leads to the erosion of physical interaction, autonomy, and critical thinking, portraying virtuality as both a haven and a trap. This paper focuses on three central questions: How do these digital sanctuaries redefine the concept of "place" in dystopian fiction? To what extent do they empower or disempower individuals? And what do these fictional portrayals reveal about our real-world relationship with technology? By comparing the divergent trajectories of the OASIS and the Machine, this study argues that virtual spaces in dystopian narratives act as mirrors of contemporary anxieties about technology's role in human agency. Ultimately, the paper contends that such portrayals challenge us to reconsider the boundaries of freedom and identity in increasingly digitalized societies.

Biography

Şevval Aparı is a graduate of TED University's English Language and Literature program, now in her second semester of master's studies. Her research focuses on feminist literary analysis and the representation of gender roles in literature, particularly in digital dystopian fiction.

Spaces of Disruption in Japanese Dystopian Novels: Heterotopia in *The Memory Police* and *The Last Children of Tokyo*

Tuğba Duzak

Social Sciences University of Ankara

The paper examines the concept of heterotopia as theorized by Michel Foucault in Yoko Ogawa's *The Memory Police* and Yoko Tawada's *The Last Children of Tokyo*. Both novels construct dystopian worlds where spaces function as heterotopias—simultaneously reflecting and challenging societal norms. In *The Memory Police*, the island embodies a heterotopia of erasure, a space isolated from the outside world where objects disappear, taking with them the collective memories and identities they anchor. This enforced forgetting transforms the island into a fragmented reality where boundaries between presence and absence, existence and oblivion blur. The secret room where the protagonist hides her editor operates as a counter-heterotopia, resisting the dominant spatial logic of the island by preserving memory and creativity in defiance of systemic oppression. In *The Last Children of Tokyo*, Tawada reimagines Japan as a heterotopia of environmental and generational decay. The urban center, once a symbol of vitality, now lies in ruin, reflecting humanity's ecological failures. The rural outskirts, where elderly survivors cling to life amid the deteriorating environment, form a stark contrast that highlights intergenerational disconnection and existential stagnation. These spaces exist in tension, encapsulating a Japan suspended between a nostalgic past and an unsustainable future. Tawada's portrayal of these fractured spaces challenges notions of progress, belonging, and resilience in a collapsing world. Through the lens of heterotopia, this paper argues that both novels critique the spatial manifestations of authoritarianism, environmental degradation, and the fragility of human agency. The analysis underscores how

space becomes a narrative and thematic device, revealing deeper anxieties about memory, identity, and survival in dystopian contexts.

Biography

Tuğba Duzak is pursuing her Master of Arts in English Language and Literature at Social Sciences University of Ankara, while also studying Japanese Interpretation and Translation. Her thesis examines trauma in contemporary British and Japanese theatre traditions, integrating comparative literature and postmodern studies.

Istanbul as a Place for Identity Formation and Liberation: A Comparative Analysis of Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* and Maggie Gee's *Virginia Woolf in Manhattan*

İrem Seda Göçen

Social Sciences University of Ankara

Virginia Woolf, as an author of innovation, chooses Constantinople as a positive place for liberation and transformation into true identity by making the gender change of Orlando happen in Istanbul. Similarly, Maggie Gee, a profound and prolific author of 21st-century contemporary literature, sets many parts of her novel *Virginia Woolf in Manhattan* in Istanbul, a place that held great significance for Woolf, and as Gee indicates, her book is a love letter to Woolf. Since the choice of Istanbul is not arbitrary in either work, this paper aims to explore how the setting and image of Istanbul (referred to as Constantinople in Woolf's Orlando) are represented in both *Orlando* and *Virginia Woolf in Manhattan* as dynamic, fluid, and positive spaces where characters discover and transform their identities, liberating themselves from the restrictions imposed in Western settings. This analysis uncovers the truth that rather than perpetuating Orientalist ideas, both *Virginia Woolf in Manhattan* and *Orlando* deconstruct the notion of the Orientalist East in an ironic tone, presenting Istanbul as a more positive place where characters can empower themselves.

Keywords: Istanbul, identity transformation, liberation, dynamic, deconstruct

Biography

İrem Seda Göçen is an MA student at Social Sciences University of Ankara, specializing in English Language and Literature with a focus on postcolonialism and cultural studies. She has been an English Instructor for over two years and is dedicated to exploring colonial legacies in literature and culture.

Refugee Spaces in *Exit West* (2017): A Lefebvrian Perspective on Connection and Displacement

Dilşad Nilsu Güzeler

Hacettepe University

This paper examines the representation of refugee spaces in Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West* (2017) through Henri Lefebvre's theory of the production of space. Hamid portrays spaces such as cities, refugee camps, and homes as socially constructed environments that reflect both connection and displacement. By leaving the protagonists' homeland unnamed, Hamid universalizes the vulnerability of displacement, demonstrating that anyone can become a refugee. Lefebvre's conceptual triad—spatial practices, representations of space, and spaces of representation—serves as the framework to analyze how the spaces in *Exit West* are shaped by cultural, political, and ideological forces. The unnamed city highlights how urban environments are reshaped by conflict, transforming them into spaces of alienation and insecurity. Refugee camps, portrayed as improvised and transient, function as differential spaces that resist the homogenizing forces of abstract space. While they symbolize fragility, they also foster diversity and solidarity among displaced individuals. London, in contrast, exemplifies Lefebvre's concept of abstract space, reflecting commodification, symmetry, and order that alienate the protagonists and amplify their sense of displacement. This paper argues that Hamid critiques the dominant spatial ideologies that underpin modern migration and displacement. By presenting spaces as active participants in the refugee experience rather than passive settings, Hamid illustrates the social and political forces embedded in spatial production. *Exit West* redefines the refugee experience, emphasizing the transformative potential of spaces as sites of both oppression and resistance. Ultimately, the novel highlights

the resilience of refugees, challenging static notions of geography and home, while calling for more inclusive and equitable spatial practices.

Biography

Dilşad Nilsu Güzeler graduated from Hacettepe University in 2023 and is currently pursuing her MA in English Language and Literature. Her research interests include postmodern novels, postcolonialism, gender studies, ecocriticism, and trauma studies.

Heterotopic Spaces of Madness and Death in "The Fall of the House of Usher"

Dilara Erdem

Social Sciences University of Ankara

Edgar Allan Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" centers on a decaying mansion and its inhabitants, reflecting themes of madness, death, and decay. This study explores the story through Michel Foucault's concept of heterotopia, spaces that exist outside of conventional norms, to analyze how Poe constructs a Gothic narrative where boundaries between sanity and madness, life and death, and interior and exterior collapse. The Usher mansion functions as a heterotopic space that mirrors the psychological disintegration of Roderick and Madeline Usher and embodies a liminal zone between natural and supernatural realms. The architectural features of the house, such as its mirrored reflection in the tarn and its ultimate collapse, symbolize the breakdown of rational order and the triumph of disorder and decay. The claustrophobic environment of the mansion amplifies the characters' mental deterioration, turning the house into a living tomb that blurs the distinction between the living and the dead. These spatial arrangements reflect Gothic conventions of confinement and isolation, emphasizing the unsettling power of spaces to influence human behavior and mental states. This study examines "The Fall of the House of Usher" through the lens of heterotopia, focusing on how the story uses space to challenge ideas of human control and stability. By situating the narrative within this theoretical framework, I explore how Poe's depiction of heterotopic spaces addresses existential anxieties about madness, mortality, and the limits of human understanding. The story offers a compelling commentary on the impact of unsettling spaces

on human identity and perceptions of reality, revealing how spatial constructs can deepen Gothic themes of fear, isolation, and decay.

Biography

Dilara Erdem is a graduate of Ankara Social Sciences University, currently pursuing her Master's degree in English Language and Literature. Her academic interests include ecophobia, environmental studies, and their intersections with literature and cinema, aiming to challenge anthropocentrism.

Social Space and the Other: A Story of Takeover in Emerald Fennell's *Saltburn*

Bahar Yılmaz

Ankara University

The notion of space has been explored through various concepts, ranging from architecture to philosophy. One of these studies, *The Production of Space* by Henri Lefebvre, introduces the idea of social space which is ideologically constructed and regulated through the actions and prohibitions of distinct groups. According to Lefebvre, what organizes the social space is the relationships between people and the actions people take by creating distinctive power dynamics. Considering these relations and actions, it can be argued that space is one of the main elements that generate the idea of the One and the Other. The actions of those in the category of One are validated and promoted, while those in the group of the Other are excluded by the dominant group of the social space and are bound to be treated as outsiders or aliens. As an example of this ideological position of the Other in social space, Emerald Fennell's 2023 film, *Saltburn*, presents the audience with Oliver's otherness in both the social and physical spheres of the Saltburn house and the Cotton Family. Oliver, the protagonist, is regarded as an outcast at college and within the Cotton Family, and the film centers on him as he plans to seize the Saltburn mansion. By examining space and the concept of the Other, this study aims to explore how *Saltburn* portrays Oliver's position as the Other and how the cinematic narrative, along with a twisted version the myth of the Minotaur, convey the struggle of spatial power dynamics.

Biography

Bahar Yılmaz is a graduate student in American Culture and Literature at Ankara University. She has participated in the Erasmus program and is passionate about drama, cinema studies, and literary theories, focusing on Absurd Drama and Gender Studies.

"The Forgotten, the Liminal, the Transgressive and the Divine": The Forgotten Spaces in Yasunari Kawabata's *Snow Country* and Susanna Clarke's *Piranesi*

Elifnaz Yüksel

Middle East Technical University

The concepts of memory, forgetting and its relationship with the setting have been a significant re-occurring factor in literature. In Yasunari Kawabata's *Snow Country* (1948) and Susanna Clarke's *Piranesi* (2020), the forgotten spaces both shape the narratives and contribute to the emotional resonation of the stories. In *Snow Country*, the isolated mountain town with hot springs and forever covered in snow does not only create a melancholic setting but it also symbolises the people in town (like Komako) are also "frozen" and bound to be forgotten by their visitors (like Shimamura). Although the depiction of the snowy mountains and the environment is fascinating, it also estranges both the reader and the protagonist to make a genuine connection with his surroundings. Contrarily, in Susanna Clarke's second novel *Piranesi* (published in 2020 and won a Hugo Award), the labyrinthian House itself causes a distortion in memories and moulds its inhabitants to live there properly. The House with its never-ending halls, vestibules, tides, and statues, it both nourishes Piranesi and causes him to forget his true identity. This paper aims to explore the parallels between the forgotten spaces of *Snow Country* and *Piranesi*, furthermore, hopes to discover how Kawabata, a significant influence on writers such as Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Jorge Luis Borges and therefore, the

magic realism genre, influenced Susanna Clarke, a representative of contemporary British magic realism.

Biography

Elifnaz Yüksel graduated from Hacettepe University in 2022 and is now pursuing her Master's studies at Middle East Technical University. Her research interests include Comparative Literature, Modernism, and Magical Realism, alongside her work in translation.

CREATIVE WRITING PRESENTATIONS

Places Women Cannot Go: The Poem "Türkiye"

İremsu Sak

Hacettepe University

The poem, titled "Türkiye", explores the Symbolic interplay between spatiality and gender-based violence, with its focus on femicides that have been happening in Türkiye as a restricting social issue for women. The poem reflects the tragic realities of murders like the murder of Emine Bulut and pedicides like the murder of Narin, Sıla. It also makes poignant references to child marriages. By questioning the figure who made it brute, the poem criticizes the justification and normalization surrounding violence against women. With the imagery of snow, forests, and frozen landscapes, the poem illustrates what is not illustrated in law: spaces women cannot/should not go to because of the complicit nature of those places that conceal acts of violence. Türkiye and forests also explore how the domestic sphere and public spaces are sites of vulnerability and suppression for women. This exploration, in the poem, shows that the title is Türkiye not because of the landscape of the country but because of the people who make those landscapes dangerous. Snow, in this sense, portrays societal denial and silence culture. The forest also is re-imagined with snow as it is unable to prevent femicides and becomes a figure to cover hate crimes and criminals. The presentation of the poem aims to analyze these symbolic spaces and past crimes and how they were forgotten by authorities to underscore cultural mechanisms that obscure violence. This analysis aims to encapsulate

memory, trauma, and resistance with examples for each symbolic reference. Through poetry, the work seeks to contribute to the discourse on gender inequality and spatial injustice and the need for direct resistance. The resistance explanation of the presentation aims to highlight the power of art in reclaiming silence narratives and advocating for the necessary actions including change in a society that has been grappling with systematic gender-based violence.

Keywords: Femicide, gender-based violence, poetic resistance, spatial injustice, art for advocacy

Biography

İremsu Sak is a fourth-year undergraduate student in the American Studies department at Hacettepe University. She is passionate about poetry and has presented at various conferences. Currently working on a poetry collection, she also has interests in gender studies and literary translation.

"The Slums"

Melina Karapunar

Ankara University

"The Slums" is a reflective poem that seeks to give an insight on how memories, sacrifices, and systemic injustices are etched into the landscapes we inherit, so that we may reflect on the complexity of working-class identity and grief. The narrator takes an introspective journey into the ruins of the slum houses that shaped her father's struggles and sacrifices. There, through spaces of memory, she reflects on systemic inequity, and the enduring burdens of inherited displacement. These spaces, etched in survival and loss present in working-class histories, become symbolic of the intergenerational struggles that the narrator faces as she grapples with the loss of her father. As she revisits these remnants of her father's life, she is compelled to confront the lasting weight of his sacrifices that led to her upper mobility. Her father's grave unravels the emotional impacts between escapism and rootedness and explores the juxtaposition between the narrator's grown perspective with her naive childhood ignorance. His lifelong labor under "chains of command" portrays the embedded sense of duty to secure and hold onto opportunities—ones he could not take for himself but envisioned for his children. These impacts emphasize the systemic failures a childhood home can represent—a portrayal of the stillness of oppression on lower class and alienation against progress for a

better future. What is left of the slum houses mirrors the narrator's grief—a rotting space where personal and collective histories collide. This portrayal invites criticisms of systems that hoard wealth yet fail to nurture individuality, creating emotional and physical ties that bind families to spaces of burden where education and creativity hardly blooms. The poem then becomes an introspection on the ways physical spaces carry emotional and generational weight, shaping a sense of belonging while preserving the scars of repression.

Biography

Melina Karapunar is a third-year undergraduate student in the Department of English Literature at Ankara University. She explores themes of feminism, identity, and minority experiences through poetry and fiction, drawing inspiration from contemporary literature and mythology.

The Poem "Blind Window" by Yağmur Erdem

Yağmur Erdem

Hacettepe University

The poem, "Blind Window" is a poem of a confined space; a rotting, reeking room that is a scaled down version of a political environment we experience. The poem is led by othersenses in the absence of sight, yet it is still descriptive of the room it takes place in. The directives of the speaker on how to overcome this state of imprisonment are crude and primitive at the beginning, as the poem explores how in the dark environment, and in our case, under the oppression that weighs on us, this state of blindness leaves no space or courage to form a thought. Survival instincts may be a primitive concept, but actually the thinking comes with the need to survive. And the moment of thought is exactly when the addressee starts burning, burns hot enough to dry down the filth that covers the window and makes them blind. They crossed a line when a moment came when they had to survive the cold, and what snapped in them as they tried their best to survive, went beyond survival and liberated them. The presentation of the poem includes another important element of the poem; Moloch, even though it is not referred to more than once. Despite its reputation to be a blood hungry deity who accepts human sacrifices and eats children in the Hebrew Bible, in this poem Moloch is the sacrifice, and his blind window eyes are the eyes of thousands, the oppressed who are easy to sacrifice, blindfolded so that they would not see the blade.

Biography

Yağmur Erdem is a sophomore at Hacettepe University, studying American Culture and Literature. She is involved in theater and poetry, working on a collection of her poems while exploring the intersections of literature and performance.

"Report"

Nazlı Hilal Atlıhan

Ankara University

What if humanity had left Earth in search of more inhabitable planets? My story "Report" delves into the themes of alienation, displacement, and the unchangeable nature of the human experience. The protagonist, a man from a distant future, is tasked with reporting everything that happens on Earth—a planet humanity abandoned millions of years ago. The story primarily explores the protagonist's feelings of being displaced and not belonging to the new human-like beings. It also offers insight into how humanity reached this point and presents a possible scenario for an apocalypse. The story shows how humanity can find hope and purpose even in a distant future and futuristic setting. At its core, it explores the familiar feeling of being displaced, framed within the context of science fiction. The story serves as a reflection on the universal experience of alienation, regardless of time or place.

Biography

Nazlı Hilal Atlıhan is a fourth-year American Culture and Literature student at Ankara University. Her writing explores ordinary experiences with profound themes, blending science fiction with human emotions. She aims to contribute meaningfully to literary discourse through her narratives.