2024 University Research Symposium

Oral Presentation Abstracts

LANGUAGES, LITERATURES, AND CULTURES

VOICES OF RESILIENCE: GWANGJU UPRISING AND TRAUMA IN HAN KANG’S "HUMAN ACTS" (2014)

Presenter(s): Goitia, Alexandra, Graduate, Spanish
Mentor: Prof. Jonathan, Druker

The study centers on Han Kang's 2014 novel "Human Acts," offering a diverse and nuanced perspective on the event that changed South Korean history. The book explores the intricacies of trauma, memory, and mourning, focusing on the societal impact of a massacre that profoundly shaped an entire society. By examining this non-European and non-American event, the following paper underscores the necessity of broadening the discourse on trauma theory. The objective is to underscore the significance of recognizing diverse cultural perspectives within a globally acknowledged field. As such, a crucial aspect of the analysis involves examining the various viewpoints of the Gwangju Uprising presented in the novel. Kang approaches the massacre from seven different perspectives: a boy who was murdered during the riot, his friend, an editor, a prisoner, a factory girl, the boy's mother, and herself. Thus, this paper not only functions as a means to counter Eurocentrism but also serves as a pathway to approach trauma from a multitude of perspectives.
This paper discusses how Joe Sacco’s Palestine represents the traumas of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through the art of the graphic narrative. With his nuanced combination of journalism and comics, of words and images, Sacco provides a unique lens through which to engage Western audiences in the multifaceted and often overlooked aspects of trauma in this longstanding conflict. His graphic narrative visualizes the structural and historical traumas faced by Palestinians, especially in the aftermath of the Nakba, and is a powerful tool for shedding light on individual and collective experiences and conveying the realities of trauma in the Israeli-Palestinian context.

This analysis examines Sacco’s visual strategies, including spatial representations, color usage, and framing, arguing that these elements contribute to the creation of a vivid and emotionally resonant portrayal of trauma. Furthermore, this paper underscores how Sacco challenges Western perceptions of the conflict by presenting a more comprehensive understanding of the Palestinian experience. It becomes evident that Sacco’s immersive style transforms readers into observers of the disaster, fostering a humanizing perspective on the Palestinians.
My presentation will examine Claudia Llosa’s film, The Milk of Sorrow (2009), within the framework of trauma theory. I will propose that the film, set in the 1980s, portrays historical, transgenerational, and insidious trauma, and aim to explore how these themes are represented in the movie and how they affect the characters. Through the analysis of the film’s portrayal of trauma, I will provide insights around the impact of traumatic experiences on Peruvian indigenous communities affected during Peruvian civil war.
MUSICAL THEATER PRO-SHOTS: QUESTIONING AN ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY TREND

Presenter(s) Dutra Guedes, Gustavo Nery, Graduate, Theatre and Dance
Mentor: Dr. Kee-Yoon Nahm
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Since the early stages of the digital era, the theater industry has been concerned about how to document and broadcast its most popular shows. Professional recordings (known as “pro-shots”) started to gain popularity by the 1980s; however, since the 2010s, the number of live musical theater professional recordings has been growing exponentially. This research intends to analyze the root of this trend by considering factors discussed by theater scholars, such as the practice of sharing bootleg recordings online; the popularity of some theater shows on social media; and the embracing of streaming services as a form of media consumption.
CAMUS’S ABSURD REBELLION WITHIN TOM STOPPARD’S DOGG’S HAMLET, CAHOOT’S MACBETH

Presenter(s)   Nance, M., Graduate, Theatre and Dance  
Mentor: Dr. Derek Munson  
Co-Mentor: Dr. Kee-Yoon Nahm

Martin Esslin’s discussion of the “Theatre of the Absurd” offers an incomplete representation of the absurd in both its underlying philosophy and its influence on humanity at a societal level. Esslin based his writings on Albert Camus’s The Myth of Sisyphus, which offers a more complete representation of the philosophy of the absurd when compared to Esslin’s cursory attempt. Camus starts by describing the absurd as a conflict between man and the world around him. This conflict is born from the human urge to look for an intrinsic meaning, or cosmic justice, in a world that is actively hostile to humanity and its endeavor due to being void of any such meaning. Camus then argues that the solution to this conflict is not to give up but to persist, to keep living in spite of that conflict, as a form of rebellion. Camus’s The Rebel expands his idea of the absurd rebellion into a communal experience that occurs when people are subjected to an unjust society, and he argues for revolution based on philosophy as a form of rebellion rather than violence. To examine the effectiveness of such a revolution, I will analyze an example of the absurd rebellion—Tom Stoppard’s plays Dogg’s Hamlet, Cahoot’s Macbeth, which he wrote in response to the state sponsored censorship in Czechoslovakia during the twentieth century. Most critical discussions about these plays focus on analyses of Stoppard’s use of Shakespeare’s works within the plays while overlooking the plays’ absurdist nature and historical context. This essay seeks to examine how Dogg’s Hamlet, Cahoot’s Macbeth can be viewed as a form of societal rebellion as argued by Camus.
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CLIMATE CHANGE AND MENTAL HEALTH IN DUNCAN MACMILLAN'S LUNGS

Presenter(s): Phurahong, Phitsinee, Graduate, Theater and Dance
Mentor: Dr. Kee-Yoon Nahm

In this paper, I argue that in order to recognize the urgency of addressing climate change rather than perceive it as a distant issue, it is important to understand the relationship between climate change and mental health. Climate change is a pressing crisis of unparalleled urgency. Our planet is warming at an alarming rate, causing extreme weather events, melting ice caps, rising sea levels, and irreversible ecosystem damage. Climate change can also impact our mental health, causing problems such as eco-anxiety, Pre-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Solastalgia, and Ecosickness. Furthermore, people may become overwhelmed, anxious, stressed, hopeless, or even depressed about the uncertain future, which can lead to inaction and thus worsen the climate emergency. How can theatre address this crisis while also bringing awareness to the significant impact that climate change can have on our mental health? The genre of eco-drama offers one solution. I will discuss Duncan Macmillan’s 2011 eco-drama Lungs, which depicts a couple that wrestles with the dreadful decision of bringing a child into a deteriorating world. The play makes a symbolic connection between ecology and pregnancy by, for example, comparing global carbon emissions to the womb of a smoking mother. By highlighting the issues of overconsumption and the trade-off between personal choices, environmental concerns, and economic conditions, the play also shows that these problematic conditions are primarily rooted in capitalism, which is a significant factor contributing to the degradation of our environment, or what we can call home. By examining the play's symbols, I will explore the profound impact of climate change on individuals. I will also demonstrate that eco-drama can present issues of climate change from a more personal and immediate perspective; theatre allows us to better appreciate its impact on our own individual well-being. Using critical methods and the theory of cultural materialism, I will delve into how climate change impacts us, affecting our physical and mental well-being.