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The Braşov Conference on German Studies between Dilletanstism and Performative Madness – A Quarter Century Retrospect

After twenty-five years of continuous activity as the initiator and organizer of the conference, the author offers a retrospective that reflects both an academic and personal project on its challenging journey from initial uncertainty to scientific establishment. The phenomenon of the Braşov German Studies Conference is understood here as a living organism and a work in progress, summarized as the result of a performative act involving numerous participants and one that, over the years, has undergone – or generate – a series of paradigmatic changes.

Keywords: *Braşov Conference on German Studies, Change of Paradigm, Performativity, Quarter Century Retrospective, Work-in-Progress.*

Gudrun-Liane Ittu (Biblioteca Universităţii Lucian Blaga din Sibiu)

Psychiatric Patients and Artists – Adolf Wölfli (1864 Bern 1930 Waldau/Bern) and Else Blankenhorn (1873 Karlsruhe 1920 Konstanz)

One hundred years ago, the art historian and physician Hans Prinzhorn, who worked from 1919 to 1921 as an assistant doctor at the Psychiatric Clinic in Heidelberg, published his groundbreaking work *Artistry of the Mentally Ill*, in which he presented ten gifted psychiatric patients not only as patients but also as artists. The book was highly successful among avant-garde artists, who found inspiration in outsider art. Already one year prior to Prinzhorn's publication, psychiatrist Walter Morgenthaler had released the monographic work *A Mentally Ill Person as Artist*, which honored Adolf Wölfli – a patient at the Waldau Sanatorium and a gifted artist. During his years in Heidelberg, Prinzhorn assembled a significant collection of patient artworks, which became the foundation of the museum that today bears his name. This collection also includes works by Adolf Wölfli and Else Blankenhorn – artists whose lives and works are discussed in the present article.

Keywords: *Hans Prinzhorn, Prinzhorn Collection, Walter Morgenthaler, Psychiatric Clinic Heidelberg, Sanatorium Waldeck, Sanatorium Bellevue, Adolf Wölfli, Documenta 5 Kassel, Harald Szeemann, Else Blankenhorn, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner.*

Stefan Lindinger (Universitatea Atena)

Werther in the Forest. On the Function of Madness in Ludwig Tieck's Novella *Waldeinsamkeit* Taking into Consideration Goethe's *Die Leiden des jungen Werther*

In his final novella *Waldeinsamkeit* (1841), Ludwig Tieck uses as the title a neologism he had coined nearly fifty years earlier in *Der blonde Eckbert*. Tieck explicitly references the now-inflated use of the term and revokes its overly romantic meaning by exposing such usage as overly sentimental. The main character, a young man named Ferdinand von Linden who longs for *Waldeinsamkeit* ("forest solitude"), is intertextually linked to the archetypal romantic dreamer Werther. Furthermore, both in *Waldeinsamkeit* and in *Werther* (1774/1787), the protagonists, who hover between the normal and the pathological due to their unbalanced imaginations, are mirrored by secondary characters who are fully consumed by madness.

Keywords: *Ludwig Tieck, Waldeinsamkeit, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Die Leiden des jungen Werther, Sentimentality, Madness, Forest, Romanticism.*

Bianca Bican (Universitatea Babeş-Bolyai din Cluj)

Pathologies of Failure in Susanne Röckel's Novel *Der Vogelgott* (2018)

Starting from its classification as a family novel, this article analyzes Susanne Röckel's *Der Vogelgott* (2018) through the following aspects: The prologue serves as an example of Konrad Weyde's madness and his failure both as an amateur scientist and as a father. The first chapter, then examined in detail, portrays Theodor Weyde's perceptual disturbances and his increasing loss of reality, using references from medical literature. Based on these case studies, the article concludes that both texts trace pathologies of failure in confronting reality.

Keywords: *Family Novel, Dysfunctional Family, Madness, Failure.*

Laura Cheie (Universitatea de Vest, Timișoara)

„Holzgesichtiger, / schlackermäuliger / Narr überm Tretrad“. Masks of Madness in Celan's Late Poetry

Paul Celan's life and work were unmistakably shaped by the traumas he experienced during and after the Second World War: the murder of his parents in a concentration camp, antisemitic attacks, a ruthless smear campaign waged against him over many years, and the lack of understanding, even from close friends, for his existential situation. These painful experiences generated in the sensitive and lucid poet from Bukovina deep feelings of survivor's guilt, loneliness, and despair. Traces of the destructive or rebellious madness of both perpetrators and victims run – more or less explicitly – through his poems. This article focuses on Celan's engagement with pathological madness in his late poetry, using the poems *Schief* from the volume *Fadensonnen* and *Holzgesichtiger* from the period of

Schneepart. It explains how the transformation of madness into a mask helps to objectify fear, making it comprehensible and bearable.

Keywords: *Celan, Masks of Madness, Schief, Holzgesichtiger*.

Beate Petra Kory (Universitatea de Vest, Timișoara)

Perspectives on Mental Illness in Heinar Kipphardt's Novel *März*

Disappointed by his unsuccessful attempts to influence society through his plays, Kipphardt returned in his final creative phase to his fascination with psychiatry, which had once inspired him to study medicine in his youth. In 1966, Kipphardt was deeply impressed by the poems of schizophrenic patient Ernst Herbeck, published by Austrian psychiatrist Leo Navratil in his book *Schizophrenie und Sprache*. From this point on, Kipphardt began to engage with the theme of *März*, which he explored in the form of film and through three literary genres: epic, lyric, and drama. The first treatment of the material was the 1975 television film *Leben des schizophrenen Dichters Alexander März* for ZDF. A year later, the novel *März* appeared; in 1977, Kipphardt published additional *März* poems in the poetry volume *Angelsbrucker Notizen*, written from the perspective of the schizophrenic. Finally, in 1980, the play *März: An Artist's Life* premiered. This article analyzes the various and conflicting perspectives on mental illness that Kipphardt presents in his novel *März*. The patient's own view of his schizophrenia is supplemented by that of the asylum's director, a proponent of biologically oriented psychiatry, and that of Dr. Kofler, who interprets psychosis as a consequence of the patient's disrupted relationship with society, alongside the views of people outside the institution.

Keywords: *Psychiatry, Psychiatric Institution, Schizophrenia, Montage Novel*.

Sunhild Galter (Universitatea Lucian Blaga din Sibiu)

Sociogram of the Disturbed Protagonist in Ulrich Plenzdorf's *Kein runter kein fern*

Ulrich Plenzdorf's short prose piece *Kein runter kein fern* (1973) depicts the hopeless situation of a disabled ten-year-old in the repressive socialist society of the former German Democratic Republic (GDR). The boy receives no help, understanding, or support – not even from his own family: his conformist father and his older brother, a police officer, who both belittle and suppress him. With his critical literary works, Plenzdorf sought to draw attention to problems of everyday socialist life, without fundamentally questioning socialist society itself. He aimed to promote a more humane and situationally responsive approach to such issues. Nevertheless, the text concludes with a biblical-apocalyptic scene in which the people's police officer brutally beats his little disabled brother, possibly even killing him.

Keywords: *Ulrich Plenzdorf, Disabled Child, GDR, Treatment of People with Disabilities*.

Roxana Nubert and Ana-Maria Dascălu-Romițan (Universitatea de Vest, Timișoara)

Close to Madness - An Approach of Herta Müller's Texts

The theme of madness has played a central role in Herta Müller's work since her debut volume *Niederungen* (1982). Even in her essay collection *Hunger und Seide*, the author writes that the mentally ill were "no more and no less than the glimpse behind the façade of this regime." In her novel *The Hunger Angel (Atemschaukel, 2009)*, madness is portrayed as a consequence of the inhumane conditions in Soviet labor camps. Likewise, in the essay collection *Der König verneigt sich und tötet* (2003), the autobiographically influenced narrator enters a world of madness, driven there by the constant surveillance and persecution by the Securitate. Madness, as an alternative mode of daily life, takes center stage in Herta Müller's poetic and essayistic work, revealing the depths of human behavior under the conditions of dictatorship.

Keywords: *Madness, The Insane, Dictatorship, Herztier.*

Delia Cotârlea (Universitatea Transilvania din Brașov)

Focalisation and Perspectivation of Hysteria in Literary Texts

The following article aims to trace the phenomenon of hysteria in the short story *Der Judensonntag* by the Romanian-German author Carmen Elisabeth Puchianu. The article begins with an outline of hysteria in its historical and sociocultural context, followed by a discussion of hysteria in the works of Freud and Breuer. It then proceeds to examine the literary depiction of the hysterical mode from a narratological perspective.

Keywords: *Hysteria, Femininity, Perspective, Focalization, Sigmund Freud.*

Alexandra Constantin (Universitatea Babeș-Bolyai, din Cluj-Napoca)

Madness in the Modern Gothic Novel. Example Study: *Der Dieb in der Nacht* by Katharina Hartwell

The present article examines the novel *Der Dieb in der Nacht* by Katharina Hartwell (2015). The novel centers around the disappearance of nineteen-year-old Felix and his supposed return years later as the double Blixen. Blixen assumes Felix's identity, causing reality to unravel and leading the protagonist Paul into madness and paranoia. The aim of this article is to demonstrate that the selected novel serves as a reworking of the Gothic novel genre to explore the theme of madness. The article begins with an examination of the Gothic novel and its defining features. The portrayal of madness is then analyzed along three focal points: the motif of the doppelgänger, the homoerotic relationship between the male characters, and the narrative technique of the unreliable narrator.

Keywords: *Gothic Novel, Madness, Doppelgänger, Unreliable Narrator.*

Doris Sava (Universitatea Lucian Blaga din Sibiu)

To tag a. On the Conceptualisation of Madness in Phraseology

Traditional concepts become mentally entrenched in speakers through constant use. Starting from the omnipresence of metaphor in everyday life, this article uses the example of the conceptualization of *MADNESS / INSANITY* to illustrate how this extreme mental state is expressed linguistically in German, how rich the phraseological material is in this context, and what metaphorical inventory exists for this concept.

Keywords: *Cognitive Phraseology, Conceptual Metaphor, Madness/Insanity.*

Kinga Gáll (Universitatea de Vest, Timișoara)

Lexical Paradigms of Insanity

Mental illnesses are likely as old as humanity itself and have always posed a human challenge. Attitudes toward these types of illnesses have changed over time, yet they are still regarded as deviations from certain socially established norms. Consequently, this otherness has always been expressed linguistically—not only in terms of psychiatric diagnoses but especially in lay language. This article examines lexical paradigms, i.e., the terms used to name mental illnesses, with the focus not on the clinical descriptions of the disorders themselves, but rather on the lexemes that generally denote mental illness.

Keywords: *Madness, Mental Illness, Mental Disorder, Taboo, Terminology.*

Adina-Lucia Nistor (Universitatea Alexandru Ioan Cuza din Iasi)

What a Fool! What Nonsense! On the Etymology and Geography of the above Surnames in Germany

The author sets out to etymologize the surnames *Narr* (for a foolish or mad person, often linked to roles in medieval carnival or Shrovetide plays) and *Unsinn* (for a mentally disturbed person), and to geographically locate their modern-day occurrences in Germany—518 telephone entries for *Narr* and 233 for *Unsinn*. Both names are concentrated in southern and eastern central Germany (see name maps for *Narr* and *Unsinn*). Furthermore, the name *Narr*, derived from the homonymous appellative, is examined in its etymological connection to the noun *Narr* and to proverbial and phraseological expressions containing this word. The analysis also addresses concepts such as "natural fools," the professional role of court jesters, and fool characters in Shrovetide plays.

Keywords: *Surnames, Name Geography, Nicknames Based on Appearance, Behavior, and Character, Etymology of the Words and Names Narr and Unsinn, Proverbs and Phraseological Expressions with Narr.*

The Teacher of German as Foreign Language as Mediator through Literature

One's native language is acquired within a socio-cultural context, from which the language itself also emerges. This grants membership in a discourse community with culture-specific structures, mental models, and communicative conventions. In contrast, the foreign language learner perceives the target language through the lens of their own culture, prompting ongoing engagement with linguistic and cultural differences. An important goal of foreign language teaching is therefore to foster linguistic and cultural awareness in order to develop intercultural competence. This article explores the extent to which literature, at the beginner level of German as a Foreign Language (DaF) instruction, can fulfill this role. How does literature enhance the potential for intercultural understanding and the development of communicative competence in the target language?

Keywords: *Intercultural Competence, Foreign Language Literature Didactics, DaF, Cultural Mediation, Intercultural Understanding.*