This interdisciplinary international conference, the second section of the project ‘Ethics & Rhetoric’ within EMMA’s line of research ‘Ethics of Alterity’, will focus on language and ethics in literary genres that depict encounters with alterity.

The situations in which the subject is faced with different or alien beings will be studied namely in novels belonging to the genre of utopia/dystopia, science fiction, fantasy, etc., as the so-called ‘genre literature’ embodies a heuristic model that dramatizes and exacerbates encounters with alterity, featuring exotic, subhuman or posthuman beings that defy human knowledge (in SF and fantasy especially). Genre literature has often been regarded as an entertaining or escapist field that does not lend itself to ethical and poetical reflections, limiting itself to a hollow and servile repetition of the genre codes. Nevertheless, theoreticians of these genres that have not been sufficiently studied highlight their defamiliarizing power through which things can be « seen ». This process of defamiliarization is often associated with the stylistic, poetic and ethical force inherent in fiction, but in its attempt at meta-conceptualizing the relationship between language and reality, genre literature seems to problematize and enhance these phenomena by making them more easily perceivable. Thus not resting content with merely questioning the mechanism of estrangement, genre literature explores the confines of readability and the break-point between the readerly and the writerly.

In their desire to represent the Other in all its complexity, writers are indeed confronted with an ethical and poetical aporia: how to describe what escapes Humanity in Human language? In the eyes of its critics, Science Fiction (SF) seems to lean towards the side of the readerly. On the border between total defamiliarization and cognition (Darko Suvin speaks of ‘cognitive estrangement’), SF seems to embody a genre that cannot afford to lose its readers. That may be the reason why extra-terrestrial languages are often filtered by English—crushing down linguistic difference under the weight of a single language that everybody can understand—as in Vonnegut’s *Cat’s Cradle* in which the creole form of English is ironed out through translation. How to represent a world in which the classical pronominal references (she/he) are not relevant anymore since ontology no longer relies on binary distinctions (as in *The Left Hand of Darkness* by Ursula Le Guin)? Yet certain SF or dystopia writers do manage to stretch out language and readability in their description of an alien situation (Russell Hoban’s *Riddley Walker* might be the best example here). But fantasy can perhaps be construed as the most subversive genre in that matter as it wallows in undecidability and interpretative wavering. In its attempt to reconcile the inexpressible, what is without a name, and the speakable or visible, according to Rosemary Jackson, fantasy delimits a zone of non-signification where the Other cannot be reduced to the self. Should we thus conclude that reaching the
The Ethics and Poetics of Genre Literature

breaking point of intelligibility can guarantee the birth of the other in its radical alterity?

Todorov brought to light the difficulty of apprehending alterity in schemes other than the ones we are familiar with, questioning the possibility of mapping the other's radical difference. The narratives about the Aztecs are among the first illustrations of this tendency to project pre-conceived expectations onto the other: ‘One would seek to transpose it into a familiar cognitive scheme in order to make it understandable and thereby at least partially acceptable’ (Tzvetan Todorov, Les Morales de l’histoire, Paris, Grasset, 1991, p. 41, our translation). Can reducing alterity to the categories of the same or resorting to the other as a foil to reinforce the self (the other being then everything the self is not) be said to be part of the more conservative trend in SF as opposed to more subversive trends of the genre (what Broderick calls allographers along Terry Dowling’s coinage ‘xenographies’) or of fantasy?

Are we condemned to a certain ethno- or anthropo-centrism—an accusation that is launched against the socio-constructionists that contend that our beliefs, desires or intentions are mediated by shared social and normative conventions that have been learnt and internalized in the specific discourse community we belong to—or can the other be ‘known’ to a certain extent while preserving its radical difference? Do tropes have a heuristic power able to change our conception of the world and of others? Is there such a thing as ‘rhetorical ethics’ that could give us access to the other? If, according to Broderick, zeugma and syllepses are characteristic of the poetics of SF, what relationships do these tropes of fusion entertain between self and other? How effective are other figures of speech in their depiction of the Other? Can they be said to be a product of an all-powerful Reason reducing alterity to the same? In La Raison classificatoire, for example, Patrick Tort indeed recalls that the two major classifying systems of human thoughts rely on metaphor and metonymy. Or, on the other hand, can tropes be said to ensure a speculative and prospective exploration, producing ‘scandalous or non-sense effects’ (Rosolato) that are capable of upsetting the classifications through which we have been trained to perceive the world? Can stylistic problems like focalisation or reported speech—that are often a privileged way to access the other’s conceptual schemes—be seen as anthropocentric blows dealt to alterity? Can the other be sketched out through lexical and syntactic inventiveness without its portrait being entirely tamed or harnessed?

The focus on this conference will thus be on the linguistic and poetic means writers resort to in their description of others (rather than be merely thematic). The point is to bring under scrutiny how fiction succeeds (or fails) in its discursive mapping of otherness and what the dialogue it imagines with the other teaches us on language and the human self. What will be explored
are the limits of language and the linguistic strategies that are displayed by genre literature to get around this predicament.

This interdisciplinary international conference wishes to attract both literary critics, linguists and stylisticians working on the literature of the English-speaking countries from the 19th to the 21st centuries.

The following themes could be addressed but they are in no way restrictive:
- linguistic representation of alterity
- tropological ethics
- stylistics and genre
- intelligibility and linguistic experimentation
- the speakable / unspeakable
- representation of cognitive structures through focalisation, reported speech, pronominal identification, etc.
“All too Inhuman: the Limits of Ethical Imagination”

Rok Benčin

This paper takes its primary inspiration from Fredric Jameson’s observation that today it is easier to imagine the end of all life on Earth than an alternative to capitalism. One of the implications that we can draw from this remark is that since there is no political alternative, the social system is subject to ethical variations. In works by philosophers such as Badiou and Rancière, we can find critical accounts on how ethics replaced politics in contemporary theory and art. Another implication of Jameson’s thesis could be that otherness is both, the condition of the possibility and the internal limit of imagination. While fiction is capable of an immense proliferation of alterity, the imagination is often balanced by a political or ethical reduction of some kind.

Since Mary Shelly’s *Frankenstein*, genre literature offers narratives of ethical dilemmas when encountering radical otherness and reflections on how this otherness is of our own construction. We can trace these narratives all the way to contemporary popular culture phenomena such as TV series *Star Trek* or *True Blood*. These examples are worth mentioning because of a tendency to reduce alterity to sameness: as if alien species and vampires were – to ironically paraphrase Nietzsche – “all too inhuman”, the human characters try to address “the human side” of their counterparts. This humanisation is put to practice through the imposition of ethical behaviour, emotions and empathy as basic human values on the “others”, and also functions as a master’s discourse, limiting the imagination.

We can find an alternative understanding of these kinds of encounters in notions like Deleuze’s “becoming”, which was designed to conceptualise alterity while continuing the nietzschean critique of ethical humanism. These will lead us closer to a more political understanding of criticism and will also invite us to rethink the ethics of literature, possibly beyond the notion of otherness.

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Greg Egan, auteur de hard sf australien, est réputé pour la difficulté, croissante depuis les années 1990, de ses romans et nouvelles : or, à la lecture, il apparaît largement indifférent à un obscurcissement du signifiant d’héritage moderniste, autant qu’à la construction hypnotisante d’un objet littéraire mystérieux – postures quant à elles représentées, en science-fiction, de la New wave britannique d’un Ballard aux textes cyberpunk de William Gibson. Bien différemment, la redoutable opacité des textes récents de Greg Egan n’est autre que celle des éléments scientifiques que l’auteur y inscrit : à l’horizon de la lecture, la résolution des difficultés semble donc toujours possible à condition de s’appliquer à dénouer le détail des démonstrations. En 2010, Jean Bessière, dans Le roman contemporain et la problématique du monde, fait référence à Georges Simondon (Du mode d’existence des objets techniques, 1958) pour dire que « la science est un processus constant, pour l’homme, d’adaptation à cette altérité qu’elle institue », altérité qui est celle de « toute réalité que désigne, révèle la science », altérité qui exige, de notre part, « la construction constante d’un nouveau rapport » à elle – altérité, donc, qui n’implique aucune « étrangeté » définitive. Plutôt qu’exposer, de façon toujours asymptotique, les figures radicales d’une Altérité étrange et étrangère résistant à la pensée autant qu’au langage humains, Egan semble de fait privilégier la médiation à l’incommunicable : à grand renfort de paratextes divers, ses romans élaborent les motifs d’une altérité “provisoire” et relèvent d’un régime de complexité à laquelle le lecteur sait toujours pouvoir s’adapter – or il n’est pas impossible que cette complexité stylistique, que nous observerons en particulier dans le roman de 1997 intitulé Diaspora, figure celle de l’humanité représentée dans le texte, figure elle-même de l’humanité au présent.

*Cédric Chauvin*

“Describing Posthuman Species, an Evolutionary Approach”

Elaine Després

Natural history and evolutionist theories offer a specific language, a set of metaphors and a vocabulary full of neologisms that can be used to describe the Other, hybrid species, extraterrestrials or post-humanity in science-fiction. This language, which is unfamiliar for most readers, maintains the effect of otherness, but is very precise and learnable. It offers a compromise to readability and estrangement, and founds the description of the Other upon scientific knowledge, therefore reducing its dangerosity without reducing its alterity; it also reinforces the effect of reality (R. Barthes) conveyed by the text that is therefore read as a scientific description embedded in the narrative.

This language of natural history is inspired by Darwin’s evolutionist poetics in *The Origin of Species*, but also by Linneus, who described imaginary beings in the first versions of his *Systema Naturae*. This poetical style is characterized by its precision, the use of similes and metaphors, neologisms and personifications, but also by a focus on the purpose and origins of each structure. In addition to providing a vocabulary to describe living beings, natural history has elaborated a systematized binominal taxonomy following the work of Linneus, which is very commonly used to name and classify posthuman species.

After analyzing a very short text written by H. G. Wells (« Man of the Year Million », 1893) that describes the post-human character of one million years B.C. and which is based on Darwin’s evolutionary theory, I will study different examples of science-fiction novels that use biology terminology to describe posthuman species such as Margaret Atwood’s *Oryx and Crake*, Brian Aldiss’ *Hothouse* and *Moreau’s Other Island* or Kurt Vonnegut’s *Galapagos*. I will focus on short passages of these texts to show how the lyrical and the scientific vocabulary intertwine and influence each other to produce uncanny yet incredibly realistic imaginary beings.

Elaine Després is currently a postdoctoral fellow at the Université de Bretagne occidentale, under the supervision of Hélène Machinal. Her research focuses on the posthuman in an evolutionary perspective. In October 2012, she defended her thesis, "Pourquoi les savants fous veulent-ils détruire le monde? Évolution d’une figure de l’éthique", supervised by Jean-François Chassay at the Université du Québec à Montréal. She has published papers on various American, British and Canadian authors such as H.G. Wells, Ray Bradbury, Arthur Miller, Margaret Atwood and Brian Aldiss. She also co-edited a book entitled *Humain, ou presque. Quand science et littérature brouillent la frontière*, published in 2009. She is a member of the "Centre Interuniversitaire en sociocritique des textes", of the "Centre de recherche..."
Figura sur le texte et l'imaginaire" and of the research group HCTI ("Héritage et constructions dans le texte et l'image").
"Encounters with alterity in British science fiction texts (1890s - 1930s): seeing oneself ‘in a glass darkly’"
Françoise Dupeyron-Lafay

This paper would focus on the strategies of representation of alterity, not that of extraterrestrial creatures, but ironically that of humans, at a period contemporaneous with the author’s as in Wells’s The Island of Dr Moreau (1896), on earth, or on another planet as in C. S. Lewis’s Out of the Silent Planet (1938), and sometimes in the future, as in Wells’s The Time Machine (1898) or A. Huxley’s Brave New World (1932). The point in common all these works share is their speculative, cautionary and strongly ethical dimension as they explore the unstable and easily-shifting territory of the human both in physical and moral terms – the evolutionist and scientific background having much to do with this instability –, endeavouring to map its elusive frontiers. In these texts, humans are seen as alien – as subhuman, non-human, inhuman, or post-human – by other humans, because they have changed, or devolved morally or physically and can no longer be immediately identified and recognized as human. Swift’s Book IV of Gulliver’s Travels (Gulliver’s traumatic encounter with beast-like but human Yahoos and his gradual adoption of the Houyhnhnmm’s perspective) is paradigmatic in this respect. The question of perspective, focalisation, and more largely of narrative authority shall of course be essential to take into account.

I should like to examine a sample of extracts exemplifying the conflicting stylistic and poetic strategies at work in the corpus: what on the one hand, could be called an anthropocentric (or its “Malacandrian-centered” reversal, in the case of Lewis) by default strategy and rests on a rhetoric of verbal incapacity and conceptual approximation in front of alterity (recurrence of negative sentences or terms, negative prefixes and affixes, of markers of indefiniteness such as “some”, “it”, or the words “thing”, “creature”, “being”, etc.; and comparisons of the unknown with the known); and what, on the other hand, can be seen as more aesthetically daring and “allographic” (Cf. Broderick) or “xenographic” (Cf. Dowling) approaches, with the recourse to neologisms and a series of tropes, especially metaphors and the hypallage that seems to be the ideal vehicle for the attempt at representing the uncategorizable. Indeed, the hypallage collapses or breaks down our usual

1 As the procession drew nearer Ransom saw that the foremost hrossa were supporting three long and narrow burdens. [...] After these came a number of others [...] apparently guarding two creatures which he did not recognize. The light was behind them as they entered between the two farthest monoliths. They were much shorter than any animal he had yet seen on Malacandra, and he gathered that they were bipeds, though the lower limbs were so thick and sausage like that he hesitated to call them legs. The bodies were a little narrower at the top than at the bottom so as to be very slightly pear-shaped, and the heads were neither round like those of hrossa nor long like those of sorns, but almost square. They stumped along on narrow, heavy-looking feet which they seemed to press into the ground with unnecessary violence. And now their faces were becoming visible as masses of lumped and puckered flesh of variegated colour fringed in some bristly, dark substance.... Suddenly, with an indescribable change of feeling, he realized that he was looking at men. The two prisoners were Weston and Devine and he, for one privileged moment, had seen the human form with almost Malacandrian eyes. (C. S. Lewis, Out of the Silent Planet (1938, The Cosmic Trilogy), chapter 19, p. 111)
cognitive and perceptual categories; it rewrites and recreates the (diegetic) world. I would argue that, unlike the zeugma that stitches incongruous elements together (with the stitches remaining visible, though), the metaphor and the hypallage are more radical and genuine tropes of fusion.

The narrators’ sudden or gradual realization that these different creatures are after all the same as themselves is characterized by its unheimlich nature (as in *The Island of Dr Moreau* or *The Time Machine*, with the Morlocks). The process is long-term and doubly paradoxical: what is initially defamiliarized, or “cognitively estranged” (Cf. D. Suvin) is not the extraterrestrial alien but the human. Besides, the defamiliarization has an ultimately heuristic and illuminating power, making “darkness visible” as it were, reassessing the concept of the human, and giving us access to a new vision and understanding of what we are, what we could become, and what we should be.

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2 The paradox about the domestic robots in Chesterton’s “The Invisible Man” (*The Innocence of Father Brown*, 1911) is telling: “The green and red of their coats were all darkened in the dusk; and their likeness to human shapes slightly increased by their very shapelessness.”
“Bleghbe'chugh vaj blHegh!: From a Rhetorical Ethics to a Politics of Style”

Jean-Jacques Lecercle

Starting from two questions raised by the organizers (Is there such a thing as rhetorical ethics? Does reaching the breaking point of intelligibility guarantee the emergence of the other in its radical alterity?), the paper will argue that what we need is not a rhetorical ethics but a politics of style. The argumentative path will introduce the Klingon empire, the Vril-ya, Emmanuel Levinas, a Marxist bear, Wagner and Garibaldi, and Riddley Walker. The passegiata will end with five positive theses illustrating the passage from ethics to politics.

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Jean-Jacques Lecercle is emeritus professor at the University of Paris in Nanterre. He has published widely on Victorian literature and the philosophy of language. His latest books are Une philosophie marxiste du langage (2004) and Badiou and Deleuze Read Literature (2010).
“The unspeakable obscenity of David Lynch’s *The Elephant Man* (1980)"

Bertrand Lentsch

When David Lynch adapted Frederick Treves’ *The Elephant Man and Other Reminiscences* (1923) to the screen, he made it a point to humanize a Victorian freak, Joseph Carey Merrick (1862-90), a monster who had been the talk of the town for unspeakable deformity. The American director’s film is obscene in more ways than one since the translation of the sergeant-surgeon’s artless and moving professional experience into a black and white hagiography, smacks of a blasphemous cautionary tale ironically indicting God for having allowed such a Darwinian eyesore. Merrick is other, the oxymoron of ugly beauty bodied forth into the mental image of the repressed (Deleuze): Pope’s malformation or Grendel ever and anon? In this face to face (Levinas) with the flotsam and jetsam of creation, the doctor’s reticent rhetoric is by force of circumstance and the requirements of the camera parodied into another mock-heroic celebration and desecration of the Nietzschean superman’s endless return. Here is a consummate work of art which rhapsodies one’s essential nostalgia at the inconvenience of being born, a neurofibromatotic man’s *sacrifice* at the hands of the madding crowd. Otherness made transcendence yet evinces discomfort with a distortion of fact, the *sacrilege* of mechanically goatish symbolism. Such a cognitive oscillation has remanded Lynch’s endeavour into the custody of an ethical aporia, the riddle of appropriating a larger than life figure. Merrick is a conundrum, hence his uncertain naming, here Joseph there John, as if there were no way of pinpointing true to type identity. The impediments of this one-off defamiliarization were therefore eased by displaying a *saraband*, a slow and lustful dance in triple time, wherein worrying weirdness is worked to death, the spectator aiding and abetting, with a vengeance. A tenor and vehicle fit for poetry, this hapax legomenon cannot and must not disseminate meaning beyond its mere occurrence. Doxa abiding for ecocritical coherence, both Treves’ and Lynch’s creed is that when all is said and done, art will prevail over life.

“Symbiotic Communication: Disrupting Notions of Alterity in the Wake of the New Wave of Science Fiction”

Christopher Leslie

This paper considers the way in which some U.S. science fiction authors attempt to depict the constraints on understanding imposed by one’s conception of self. Although science fiction is not always known for its ethical depiction of alterity, there are some notable cases in which authors have sought to break out of this paradigm. What is remarkable about these authors is that they attempt to do so through their depiction of a nonhuman mindset. In so doing, they use science fiction to announce the need for an ethic of understanding that is not tied to human culture and values.

Isaac Asimov, who gained his reputation as an author of the golden age, is not usually the first who comes to mind when it comes to the effective depiction of alterity because of his human-only galactic empire stories. Nevertheless, his early career showed an interest in the ethical depiction of alien species, and in his 1972 novel *The Gods Themselves*, Asimov brings this ability full force. In depicting a world with an alternate physics, Asimov is clever enough to imagine species with different biologies - and therefore different senses of logic and even different cultures. The three interconnected parts of the novel demonstrate that there is no such thing as pure logic, but only logic that makes sense according to a particular physical universe.

Vonda McIntyre’s 1975 first novel, *The Exile Waiting*, likewise depicts an unexpected communication: a telepathic connection between Mischa, the protagonist, and her disabled sister. Mischa seeks to escape from the earth that has been stripped of its resources by befriending one of pair that pilots a spacecraft that are growing apart. The novel plays word games with the reader, intentionally causing confusion, and the intricate landscape makes understanding even more typical. In the true technique of the new wave, the novel causes confusion; what makes it interesting, however, is that the mistaken beliefs the characters have to reconsider and how they must overcome the landscape of opposites and similarities in order to escape.

In a similar vein, James Tiptree, Jr. (the pen name of Alice Sheldon) wrote a novel in 1978 that depicted the interrelationship between disparate worlds, *Up the Walls of the World*. In this novel, Tiptree combines three different settings: a U.S. research lab implicated in the military-industrial complex, an alien planet with life forms that have a different biology than humans, and a computer in deep space. In so doing, Tiptree considers something long held to be a theme of science fiction: what it means to be sentient. Encountering the other, however, is painful. Only by stripping away
their bodies is it possible for different species to relate. In other words, our bodies, our connections to the world impact our understanding of it.

It is all too easy in science fiction to depict the just treatment of other species and to suggest that one has ethically depicted the Other. In these post-new wave fictions, authors seek to push through the facile notions of difference and encourage the nature of mutual intelligibility. While many authors depict alien species who are, if you scratch the surface, just like humans, these authors consider what it might be like to truly encounter difference. In so doing, they call readers’ attention to the ways their own cognitive patterns are implicated in their expectations of what ethical treatment of others should be.

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Hélène Machinal

“People say to me, ‘so is *The Stone Gods* science fiction?’
Well, it is fiction, and it has science in it, and it is set (mostly) in the future, but the labels are meaningless.”

Jeanette Winterson

Jeanette Winterson’s rejection of labels is the starting point of the approach to *The Stone Gods* (2007) we would like to propose. Our analysis thus opens with a paradox: although “traditional” science fiction based on Suvin’s “cognitive estrangement” continues to flourish, an increasing number of contemporary British novelists produce novels in which a variety of facets evoke genre literature (SF, Utopia, Dystopia and Post-cataclysmic novels in Winterson’s case) while the novels reach beyond these boundaries. Such a paradox induces the necessity of a reflection on genre boundaries: how can *The Stone Gods* be read as SF and why does it reach beyond?

To try and explore this paradox, we will focus on the epistemological and ontological precepts on which the diegesis is elaborated. Hinging on two characters (a female scientist and a female robot-sapiens), incarnations of identity versus alterity, who nonetheless fall in love with one another, the separate sections of the novel «explore the boundaries between carbon and silicon life forms – in other words, what is a human being, how do we define what is human».

Radical alterity and relative identity are then means to create both defamiliarization and estrangement, and yet the uncanny feeling their proximity triggers leads to a thrust beyond dichotomies.

The cyclical dimension of a novel in which the characters reappear in different space-times can also be connected to the political substract of the novel. Oppositions such as the feminine and the masculine, the natural and the artificial, the post-human and the pre-human, the future and the past, the evolved and the archaic, globalized control of power and primitive tribal feuds could be analyzed as emblematic of the dynamics of utopian politics which, according to Fredric Jameson, “always lie in the dialectic of Identity and Difference”. Alongside the reflection on the individual, Winterson also projects us into a “post 3war” world in which the collective body of human society is doomed by its inability to preserve a balanced ecological system. The repetition of the same process of domination leading to exclusion and destruction — be it on a primitive island (Easter Island in Section 2), on Planet Blue (section 1) or in Wreck City (section 3) — enables the author to

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4 With the examples of Ian Banks, Ian Watson, Dan Simmons or Ken McLeods.
5 One can mention Will Self, Kazuo Ishiguro, Maggie Gee or David Mitchell.
engage her reader in political and ethical debates which are emblematic of post-humanism.

Winterson’s narrator is called Billie Crusoe, and the reader does not need to wait for the second section in which said Crusoe is marooned on an island to understand that Winterson’s novel is also connected with a meta-reflection on language, fiction and on how writing interacts with reality. The aesthetics of fragmentation and dislocation thus pervades the novel throughout; and yet, the reading process opens the perspective of connectedness (as we see, for example, when the narrator finds the remains of the manuscript of the novel we are reading). Beyond SF, Utopia or Dystopia, beyond genre, we therefore discover that the very essence of fiction writing and reading may rest on the uncanny.

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One of the most stereotypical manifestations of alterity is that of the ‘vampiric other’ whose origins have traditionally been traced back to the 18th century and the birth of Gothic fiction. Recently, novels that embrace a vampiric theme tend to be associated with genre literature and popular fiction. The way vampires are represented in written (as well as television and film) fiction has been amply analysed from a variety of perspectives. For instance, Bailie (2011) highlights some connections between the figure of the vampire and that of the popular romance hero. These connections are also investigated by Mukherjea (2011) who specifically looks at issues of masculinity in the representation of vampires in written fiction. This paper proposes to look at the linguistic representation of modern vampires to consider whether some of the previous claims made concerning the identity of these non-human entities are, in fact, textually realised via specific linguistic and stylistic means. I use a corpus stylistics methodology and focus on two series of vampire novels, J. D. Ward’s *Black Dagger Brotherhood*, and Charlaine Harris’s *Sookie Stackhouse* novels. I look at two large corpora of novels (eight and twelve works respectively) to investigate whether the ‘otherness’ of vampires is, indeed, linguistically projected or whether, instead, the vampire’s humanity as opposed to their alterity is, not just emphasised, but also linguistically and thematically encouraged.

References

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**Keynote Speaker: “Who are vampires? A stylistic analysis of the ‘vampiric other’”**

Rocío Montoro
“Language Variety in Terry Pratchett's Fantasy Fiction”

Linda Pillière

In recent years, it has been claimed that science fiction and fantasy fiction seek to « challenge readers by interrogating what have become habitual and reflexive modes of thought » (Mande 2011) and for Swinfen (1984) the role of fantasy is to make « the familiar strange » and « the strange familiar ». Yet how far is the style and language of such novels really innovative? A fantasy text, just as any other text, is produced within a specific cultural and social context, and the fantasy worlds of novels by writers such as Terry Pratchett frequently cultivate references that are familiar to the reader. The question then arises as to whether the language of these novels represents « otherness » and how far it is linguistically deviant. Focussing on novels by Terry Pratchett, this paper will investigate the role played by language in creating the fantasy world with special attention being paid to the use of language varieties. It will investigate to what extent the language in these novels is embedded in its culture of origin and simply playing on existing characteristics of English and their resemblances to existing dialectal forms, and how far such varieties may be deemed innovative and capable of expressing a sense of “otherness”.

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**Linda Pillière** is Professor in English Language and Linguistics at Aix Marseille University, and currently Head of English. Her PhD thesis (Paris 4 Sorbonne) was a linguistic analysis of Virginia Woolf’s style. Since then she has published a number of articles in the field of linguistics and stylistics. Her research interests encompass stylistics, sociolinguistics, enunciative linguistics, and intralingual translation.
“A Political Philosophy of Stylistic Defamiliarization: What Is Really Translated in James Kelman’s Translated Accounts?”

Simone Rinzler

The preface of James Kelman’s Translated Accounts – A Novel warns the reader. The situation which is going to be told is post-apocalyptic. “[C]hronology is important but not to an overriding extent” and the “translated accounts” the reader will discover and struggle with are “narrations of incidents and events” which happened “in an occupied territory or land where a form of martial law appears in operation”. The whole text is a “grafting” of various translated texts “by three, four or more individuals”.

An important precision is added: “While all [these texts] are ‘first hand’ they have been transcribed and/or translated into English, not always by persons native to the tongue”. What is more, these accounts have been written before the invention of computers. The texts have been edited and controlled, but to no avail.

All this is revealed in an impersonal style. The preface is neither signed nor dated. As in the novels studied by Sorlin (2010) such as Riddley Walker, the “grafted” texts presented here as “a novel” are written in “Weird English” (Evelyn Nien-Ming Ch’ien 2004) recalling Ken Saro-Wiwa’s “Rotten English” in Sozaboy, the “new englishes” (without capital letters) of postcolonial studies and David Peace’s impersonal style in GB84.

Apart from all these linguistic and stylistic features, the play with written language is pervasive. Punctuation fills whole paragraphs together with various fonts and non-Latin characters such as:

“@ # ! ± 4 % % ° Σ” (Kelman 2001, 43).

Words are coined, stuck together, unfinished. The rules of MLA and Chicago styles are flouted:

“<#h <#h <#h <#h <#h <#h <#h <#h <#h <#h <#h <#h 6 . 6 Î Items::hot:whatlanguage baynets bayonets old fashioned:” or “artist-lawyer if fatherin his own country respected man ( ? ) paid me not paid me heed” or “Å Ç Ė Ŧ ŧ Ť ( ? ) artist-fatherhec alledfatherstothem 2 = ü” (Ibid.)

Not only Language and the World are post-apocalyptic. Language has become the main casualty. I will address the question of what is really translated here, in this topsy-turvy, impersonal and approximate world.

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anglophone (to be published). She is a specialist of discourse analysis and stylistics. She has worked on a theory of committed macrolinguistics. Her philosophical, historical, social and political approach is language-centred.
“The Abysmal Style of H.P. Lovecraft”

Christopher L. Robinson

H.P. Lovecraft has acquired the status of a cult figure in world literature. The ever-increasing popularity of his fiction, as well as its notoriety, can be attributed to several factors, including the peculiarities of his language. The most salient features of his idiolect include a wild penchant for linguistic invention; the use of scientific and scholarly jargon; the ‘transcription’ of a fictive rural dialect; an extravagant style characterized by ‘adjectivitis’, or the excessive use of modifiers; and a predilection for archaic words and spellings, together with stilted turns of phrase. Despite its popular appeal and numerous imitators, Lovecraft’s style is frequently denigrated by critics, and is even a cause of embarrassment for some of his fans. When not simply dismissed as inept, the author’s writing is usually defended on one of two grounds. The first is to say that it is perfectly appropriate to convey the grotesque atmosphere of his tales. The second is to attribute the failings of his style to the ineffability of his vision. The unspeakable horrors of Lovecraft’s universe, his champions say, cannot be described in easily readable prose. I propose a different take on the writer’s verbiage, one inspired by a metaphor from Giorgio Agamben, who describes the genesis of language in terms of a breach (langue and parole, the signifier and the signified, the semiotic and the symbolic). When viewed in this perspective, writing involves making a leap across the abyss that separates the non-signifying materiality of the letter from the comprehensible word. What happens, however, when the writing subject is unable to overcome the potentially terrifying experience of that inaugural leap? This is the question that I propose to explore with the weird fiction of H.P. Lovecraft.

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“Of chimeras and men, or the impossibility of representing otherness”.  
Maylis Rospide

When Damien Broderick dubbed science fiction writers “allographers” and “xenographers” he meant to underline the capacity of this genre to embrace and transcribe alterity. Peopleed by strange and unheard-of creatures, this genre should be the locus where the Other is depicted in all its strangeness and difference. However, in Will Self’s work, the encounter with alterity boils down to taming it into sameness: it flattens out difference and the defamiliarizing power of science fiction. The empiricist conundrum (what has not been experienced cannot be construed) impedes the power of fiction, and the chimera — that alien Other — is a mere juxtaposition of known parts. We shall try to demonstrate that this failure is not a flaw but is inherent to science fictional works.

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“Stylistic techniques and ethical staging in Octavia Butler's ‘Speech Sounds’”

Sandrine Sorlin

Octavia Butler's short Story « Speech Sounds » does not depict an encounter with alien beings on unknown territories. It is humanity as we know it that the author defamiliarises for us: in this post-apocalyptic world, a virus has deprived humans of their ability to speak and read, bringing the species back to prelinguistic animality, with some individuals like Rye and Obsidian trying to resist the inevitable regression. Using human language to depict wordless humanity runs the risk of implausibility. Yet we will show how Butler manages to make us forget the predicament. Drawing on Text World Theory and cognitive stylistics, we will see to what extent Butler's dystopia can be said to be based on metonymic cognitive processes which are a characteristic of the genre (Stockwell 2000). There are ethical implications to language loss that “Speech Sounds” implicitly highlights: in the absence of what makes ethical social life possible, not only has the socio-economic superstructure collapsed on itself, but ethical care for the other has been replaced by violence and indifference.

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The Ethics and Poetics of Genre Literature

**Keynote Speaker: “Ambient Worlds in Science Fiction”**

Peter Stockwell

Ethics is the difference between what is and what should or could be, and cognitive poetics deals with concepts like this most efficiently with Text World theory. However, ontological status and epistemic content are not the only material of the rich worlds that readers construct from literary works: narratorial and authorial tone and the sensory atmosphere of the imagined world are also important in the reading experience. Together these effects constitute ‘ambience’. This talk explores the experiential consequences of ambient features of reading, with specific reference to the science fiction of China Miéville, and considers the significant of a new understanding of literary ambience for ethics.

*Peter Stockwell* holds the Chair in Literary Linguistics at the University of Nottingham. Among his first books were volumes on *Impossibility Fiction* and *The Poetics of Science Fiction*, and among his latest are books on *Texture: A Cognitive Aesthetics of Reading*, and *The Handbook of Stylistics*. He is most widely known for his work in cognitive poetics and stylistics. He is currently working on the language of surrealism.
Conference venue: site Saint-Charles
(Rue du Professeur Henri Serre)
Salle des colloques n°1

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